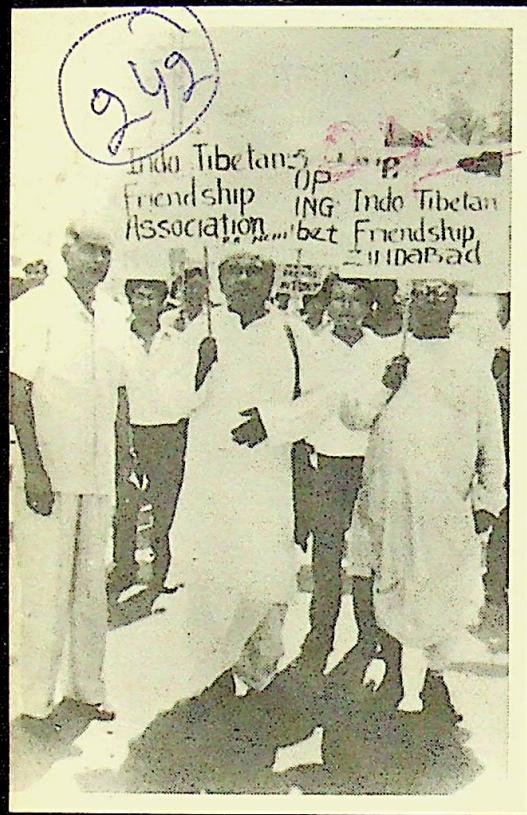


# Indian Public on Tibet



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**TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS  
1997**





# Indian Public on Tibet

शारदा पुस्तकालय  
(संगीवनी शारदा के द्वा)  
क्रमांक २४२

Tibetan Youth Congress, Office of the Central Executive Committee  
McLeod Ganj 176219, Dharamsala (H.P.), India

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**TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS**  
**1997**

## **TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS**

The Tibetan Youth Congress, founded in 1970, is the largest non-governmental organisation of Tibetans in exile. The organisation serves as a common forum to struggle for the restoration of Tibet's independence. It also strives to preserve and promote Tibetan culture and identity, particularly among the Tibetan youths brought up in exile, and also educate Tibetan people about democracy. It has 63 regional worldwide with a total membership of over 13,000.

Copies of this compiled statement are available from the Tibetan Youth Congress.

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THE DALAI LAMA  
MESSAGE

Tibet and India share centuries-old historical and cultural relations. Ever since Buddhism was brought to Tibet in the 8th century, one could say without exaggeration that the Tibetan way of life was influenced by Indian thinking and philosophy. As a result, Tibetans generally look to India with great respect and admiration. To them it is the sacred land of the Buddha and thus a place for pilgrimage. It therefore seems natural that when Tibet was invaded, occupied and ultimately when thousands of Tibetans were forced to flee their homeland that India was the place to seek asylum.

We remain deeply grateful to the government and the people of India for their tremendous sympathy and support during this most tragic period in the history of Tibet. I often describe the special relationship between India and Tibet as being similar to that of a guru and chela. It is therefore morally right that when the chela is in trouble the guru should be there to give support.

Today there is world-wide support for the Tibetan struggle and it is also growing as more and more people become aware of the tragedy of Tibet's recent history and the unimaginable human suffering the Tibetan people continue to experience. And for India, more than any other country, it has a moral responsibility to save the Tibetan culture and nation from disappearing. The issue of Tibet also has a direct bearing on India's long-term interests and security.

I am, therefore, pleased to learn that to mark the 50th anniversary of India's independence, the Tibetan Youth Congress is bringing out this publication titled, "Indian Public on Tibet". I welcome this publication and hope that it will make the readers and all concerned realise the importance of resolving the issue of Tibet.

November 10, 1997



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## Introduction

Independent Tibet has a recorded history of over 2000 years. This glorious history has been carried out till 1949, when the Communist China forcibly occupied Tibet. The occupation of Tibet after the founding of the United Nations Organisation(U.N.O) is a black stigma to the conscience of the free world that needs to be corrected. Chinese occupation of Tibet resulted in the shifting of the government of Tibet, Gaden Phodrang, to exile in India. His Holiness the Dalai Lama followed by over 100,000 Tibetans took refuge in India and other neighbouring countries.

Indian government and the public has supported Tibetans in the process of setting up different Tibetan settlements, schools, offering the necessary land and other infrastructures that were needed. The Government of India has helped Tibetans in all spheres except in political field. It is the Indian public and only Indian public whose pressure to their government can result into a tangible support from the Indian Government on the issue of Tibet. And I earnestly hope that people of India will continue to exert pressure on their government until the day that Government of India will wake up and support the Independence movement of the people of Tibet. This will turn into a mutually beneficial step.

In the early days of exile in 60s, even though the people of India have very little source of information on Tibet and hence ignorant on many points, the then Indian leaders understood the whole implication of Chinese occupation of Tibet and therefore supported the issue of Tibet whole-heartedly. National leaders irrespective of their party credentials, supported us from the core of their mind with complete and deep understanding of the issue and its implications. And those leaders remained committed to their stands and remained supporter of Tibet until and to the end of their life. We strive forward to see and maintain this trend to continue in the coming days as well. This publication is a small step by the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) in that direction.

This book will be a step toward strengthening the friendship between the people of two countries and support to the Tibetan In-

dependence movement within the Indian public and ultimately from the Government of India. If only the Indian government recognizes the Tibetan government-in-exile, half of the world will follow suit the next day. India's support to the Tibetan issue is crucial and will be the deciding factor. As such Indian supporters of Tibet carries a very special and heavy responsibility to translate the existing public support into a governmental support on the issue of Tibet.

When we look at the world history, no emperor however mighty were able to rule indefinitely, no dictator however powerful lasted long, and no colonial regime however ruthless could not subjugate for ever. The tyrant and racist Chinese communist regime will have to go. It is a matter of time until it will collapse under its own weights. The day will come when the dream of the martyrs of our fatherland will realize. Each drop of blood spilled into the Tibetan soil will germinate into different letters culminating into **F R E E  
T I B E T.**

November 10, 1997

Tseten Norbu

Dharamsala

President

India

TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS

## **Li Peng's visit:A cringing India lost all its bargaining chips**

**Ram Jethmalani**

Our Government displayed cringing obsequiousness and inflicted severe damage on India's honor and dignity when it received- and entertained and confabulated with -the Chinese Prime Minister early last month. It acted as if it invited Mr. Li Peng only to seek forgiveness for some sinful act in the past.

When Alexander the Great invaded Punjab and continued his penetration beyond the Jhelum, the Paurava King, Porus, valiantly stood up to him, but was defeated in the last pitched battle which Alexander fought in Asia. The latter fell sorely wounded into his hands. Even in defeat, Porus acted with a dignity that not only saved Indian honor but compelled Alexander to win over Porus as a friend and an equal.

Even the naked Faqirs whom Alexander encountered on the banks of the mighty northern rivers of India, showed an adequate degree of pride and indifference to the royal conqueror. When Alexander told them that he had left Macedonia on a mission of world conquest, they laughed hysterically in his face and ridiculed his futile penetration of India as result of this sobering spiritual experience.

In contrast, the conduct of India's Prime Minister, the rest of his Government and the highly-paid bureaucrats in the External Affairs Ministry literally put the nation to shame. We conveniently forgot that Mr. Li Peng was the Prime Minister of a country which had, within recent history, enacted the massacre of Tiananmen Square in which young students thirsting for democratic freedom were

mowed down in cold blood. We conveniently forgot the Chinese betrayal of 1962 and their sustained and vicious hostility during the Bangladesh War of 1971. We did manage to secure from Mr. Li Peng an enigmatic smile. But that only showed the dignitary's amused contempt rather than any desire to build Panchsheel, but even there he showed his allergy to the word "Panchsheel" just because it is Indian and the word found no mention in the joint communique that mercifully ended the visit.

The visit, like all others of its kind, must be evaluated in terms of our national interests and anxieties. Our major concern is the unsolved border question. If the Nehru Government was right in going to war in defence of our Himalayan borders, one assumes that we were sure where the borders lay. Even though the military defeat of 1962 is too humiliating to be recalled, we did act with dignity and we decide to redeem our honor. The entire Parliament of India with one voice resolved to recover Indian territory lost to the Chinese. It was a solemn pledge made to the Nation by the Nehru Government. It remains binding on those who swear by his policies. We have not been able to fulfil the pledge or even honorably settle the border question for three decades.

This is not to suggest that we should fight another war to recover our territories, but if no honorable solution is possible, we must continue to show our displeasure. Why did Mr Rajiv Gandhi visit China and why did we invite the Chinese Prime Minister to India at all ? Why was no spade-work done and why were not some assurances sought in advance ? Obviously, the Chinese Prime Minister made it very clear that the solution of the border dispute is not in sight. It was certainly not even on item in the agenda of his visit. Very confidently, he declared that while he talked to us, the border question will be put in cold storage. He did not even say when it will be seriously discussed, much less settle. Rajiv Gandhi's visit had produced a joint Working Group that never worked. The group has nothing to show by way of achievement ever since it was set up three years ago. Mr Li Peng assuredly went back fully satisfied that

the Indians are no longer serious about recovering their lost territory.

Another concern of ours is China's expanding nuclear arsenal and development of strike capability that threatens our security. There is no evidence that we communicated our anxiety on this score to the Chinese, or that the Indian Government has any policy eliminating or neutralizing this grave threat. The joint communique is conspicuous in its silence on this most important issue.

Our third concern was Chinese supply of arms including nuclear technology to countries hostile to India. Mr Li Peng was brutally forthright. He made it clear that China's friendship with Pakistan was paramount and any relationship with India will not result in any change, publicly supported the Pakistani idea of a Nuclear-free Zone in south Asia. We almost had a diplomatic skirmish with the Russians for supporting the Pakistan position, but we totally lost our nerve when the Chinese did the same.

The three and a half page communique consisting of 12 paragraphs is almost wholly filled with the usual cliches and diplomatic circumlocutions which state nothing concrete. Not so the Chinese. They succeeded in extorting from us a confession of guilt for the crime of having provided asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers who have escaped from persecution from what the joint communique refers to as their Motherland. It is sad beyond measure that we could not summon enough moral courage to display legitimate pride in our declared constitutional values and the due performance obligations which the Constitution so clearly enjoins.

Theoretically, every sovereign State may refuse asylum to victims of political persecution in their homeland, but it is undeniable that in modern International Law, no civilized nation can or does refuse political asylum. Impartial students of world affairs have already convicted the Indian Government of a gross betrayal of Tibet.

Tibet was never apart of China. It was always a sovereign Independent State. During the Nepalese invasion of the 18th century,

the Chinese Government sent soldiers to defend it. Some element of Chinese Army remained in Tibet with Tibetan consent, but the last of them was driven out in 1911. China has exercised no paramount or legal authority over or within Tibet.

The Nehru Government had obviously not done it's home work when it decided to hand over Tibet on a palter to China. Pandit Nehru never got over his guilt complex, but and to Government to slave its conscience continued to retain the Dalai Lama and his followers on Indian soil. Having permitted them to stay there, our constitutional duty is clear. Citizens and non-citizens alike enjoy the fullest liberties until they are taken away by a just and fair law. The Tibetans refugees were within their rights to stage a peaceful demonstration against one whom they considered an illegitimate invader and occupier for their territory. While the security of every visiting dignitary is our responsibility, to prevent peaceable demonstration and commit police atrocities on unarmed refugees is both morally demeaning and totally unconstitutional. Sound diplomacy required that we should have refused to reiterate our ignominious stand on Tibet except for a price. But we got nothing out of them except vague and meaningless commitment to peace and disarmament in the abstract. The principle of non-interference and non-aggression is always welcome to a power that is in illegal occupation of somebody else's territory.

Mr. Li Peng's visit did India no good. We lost all bargaining counters for any future negotiation with the Chinese. We condoned Chinese crimes but pleaded guilty to some we had not even committed. By making oblique references to "emerging oligarchies", we made it difficult for us to develop friendly relation with the United State and other democratic and free societies of the world. Mr Li Peng must be wondering how stupid Indians can be.

*Indian Express, May 14, 1992*

## Tibet a willing shangri la

Bhupinder Singh

The unusually (for the Tibetan leader) warm reception accorded to the Dalai Lama by the US Congress recently will not have escaped in Mcleod Ganj, a Tibetan settlement above Dharamsala, whose few thousand aging exiles have for so long accustomed themselves to clutching at straws that the slightest hint of favor draws excited, ecstatic comment.

Nostalgic Tibetans can be forgiven for their naivete, perhaps, in reading over great significant into political non-event. For, in an exile's world, strewn to the wreckage of unfulfilled promises and betrayed expectations, it is not so unusual to read substance into shadows long after reason dictates otherwise. So, as it has been so often in the past, a new set of news clippings will go up in Cafe Shambala and the government building, and be replaced by another set as meaningless weeks later and the mirage that was Tibet grows ever more hazy. What hope remains then for a nation which, 32 years after it was incorporated into the People's Republic of China, no country recognizes, leave alone supports.

A look at Tibet on the eve of the Communist Chinese invasion takes one to an isolated theocratic state, steeped in medievalism, a regional oddity, in an age of assertive nationalism and military blocs. Given this, it was more a question of when China seized it rather than if. But the inevitability of the proposition cannot, in anyway, detract one from the unfairness of the scourge that descended on the Tibetans.

China's right to Tibet is a controversial subject with a history of claims and counter-claims, that have included such inanities as the argument that Tibet is a Chinese province because a seventh century Tibetan King (Songsten Gompo) took a Chinese wife. The truth, as is usually the case, lies somewhere in between Tibet, most of it harsh inaccessible plateau hardly the converted jewel of a celestial emperor's crown.

On the other hand, a theocratic Tibet, committed to non-militarism, was historically prone to outside temporal influence. For the most part it was Mongolia, Tibet's northern neighbor, which exercised this, in return, accepting Tibet's spiritual overlordship. As far back as thirteenth century Kublai Khan, the mongol emperor and grandson of Chingis (Ghenghez) embraced Buddhism under the tutelage of Phakpa, the high lama of the old Sakya school. In return, the Mongol King anointed his Sakya sect, the political masters of Mongolian held Tibet. Over three centuries later, Altan Khan, a powerful Mongol Chieftain, became a disciple of Tibet's Gellugpa sect(1577) and used his army to consolidate Tibet, this time under the influence of the Gelugs, bestowing the Mongol title Dalai Lama (ocean of wisdom) on Sonam Gyatso, his teacher.

Ever since, Lhasa's non-militaristic theocracy looked to the mongols and afterwards the Manchus the inheritors of the priest-pattern relationship, for protection. But given Tibet's isolation behind formality, and Peking's rulers contented themselves with posting as court official (Amban) with a token force to keep the emperor informed on Tibet. In 1888 and again in 1894, when Tibet was actually invaded, it was the small Tibetan volunteer army which faced the Nepalese, and later the British, unassisted by the mainland.

During the upheaval following the deposal of the Manchus by Chinese nationalists in China (1911), patriotic Tibetans seized the opportunity to rid themselves of the increasingly meddlesome Amban, and in 1912 the last of the Manchus soldiers was out of Tibet. The thirteenth Dalai Lama formally declared Tibet a sovereign state. This status it retained until october, 1950, when China's new com-

unist rulers invaded Tibet and imposed the restrictive 17-point agreement on the Tibetan government. The ill-fated agreement, effectively promising the retention of the pre 1950 status quo in Tibet in return for the Chinese control of defence and foreign affairs, could not last, given the opposing nature of religious Tibetans against the atheists, the anti-cleric Communists.

In march 1950, following the widespread anti-Chinese demonstrations in the wake of an abortive Chinese attempt to abduct the Dalai Lama, the 14th spiritual leader fled to India and Tibet was formally incorporated into the mainland.

Ever since, the Dalai Lama, who sought asylum in India, has been a ceaseless, though unsuccessful, champion of human rights in Tibet and Tibet's right to self-determination. While the spiritual leader's personal standing has never been higher, the odds against his host nation, India, has placed curbs on the Tibetan leader's political activities. His country, too, is not so well known to champion its cause in the west, where communist china has long been regarded as a foil to the Soviet Union. So the USA, which cried itself hoarse on the Soviet Union's human rights record, deems it politically expedient to turn a blind eye to China's treatment of its minorities. No less a person than Mr. George Bush then CIA director, on a 1973 visit to Lhasa, when Mao's Cultural Revolution, (in which even China's present leadership concedes that millions died as a result of brutal purges and social turmoil) was at its peak, confessed that he was "impressed" by China's "achievements" in Tibet.

And China's achievements in Tibet, on the surface, make impressive reading. A country which boasted no roads in 1950 now has direct road links not only to Beijing through Sining but also to Chengdu (Sichuan) in the east and Kashgar in the west, besides the Karakoram road, skirting Tibet's frontiers with Nepal and India into Pakistan. Non-monastic education, almost non-existent in 1950, made impressive strides as did modern health care. Equally impressive statistics are cited for the farm output, power generation, mining and industrialization. All this makes one wonder why, in spite

of the tight security on Tibet's frontiers, "green brained" Tibetans continue to flee the "socialist paradise".

The truth is not far to seek. Tibet is the poorest of China's autonomous regions, with an annual per capita income less than \$100 (a third of India's), and the Chinese leadership has conceded a gross manipulation of the figures. Short-sighted decisions, such as forced communication, putting nomad pastures under cultivation, and indiscriminate logging in the south and the Yangtze basin have, in their turn, played havoc with what was always a fragile habitat.

But in its poverty, or unsuccessful socio-economic experiment, Tibet is hardly unique. Similar stories can be narrated for other parts of China, and developing nations elsewhere. What sets Tibet and China's other minority-dominated areas apart is the distinctive anti-minority policies practiced by Beijing's rulers, a kind of racism which hasn't its parallel in history.

China's Yangze and Huang-Ho basins, home of the Han races (not to be confused with the Huns) with advanced civilizations dating back four millennia, were historically advanced cases amidst an otherwise backward region. In spite of or perhaps because of this, China's aggressive neighbors, in the mountainous west and north made a practice of raiding the Han regions and have been centering their kingdoms in Han territory (Mongols 1279-1363, Manchus 1644-1911) causing among the Hans "Wojen" (barbarians) at bay that the Chinese Ming dynasty constructed the great wall around China's traditional territories. In the same vein the Manchus as against the British and the French. Communism has not been able to blunt this deep-rooted antipathy for the "foreigners" beyond the great wall.

Against this background it is easy to see how Beijing views its minorities not as equal partners but building extensions for provided agricultural and mineral wealth and accommodating the growing Han Masses China's official organs. The Peking Review (December 1985) is unabashed about this, claiming that in 1940 China's

three north-eastern provinces had a total of 30 million people. By 1982 there were 100 million in the region, and 30 million to 40 million of the increases was a result of migration. And according to this growth rate, the four western autonomous regions can accommodate an increase of 60 million in the next three decades. As for the regions present inhabitants, they are to be assimilated into the Han Masses, and where that proves difficult, to quote a chilling Moa analogy, we must "wipe the slate clean and begin anew".

Seen from this point of view, everything falls in place: the Chinese obsession with destroying the smallest vestiges of Tibetan culture, the brutality of seemingly senseless purges, the obsession without correction etc. In such a system it is not enough that monks and religious objects are removed from a monastery, and the building is used for another purpose. The building itself, the symbol of the former system, must be pulled apart, brick by brick, and its former inhabitants the monks and the lamas, must participate in its destruction. Similarly, every other facet of the former regime- teachers, doctors, traders, landowner, tribal chiefs must be purged. And it is not sufficient that these wrongdoers should be punished. They must be made aware of their crime through intense indoctrination, and they must confess to it. Only after this can they be correctly sentenced.

Against such an all-pervasive systems, the guideless Tibetans the vast majority of them being illiterate nomads, farmers and poor monks had little chance for survival. Hundreds of thousands died in the brutal purges, the prison mines, or quite simply of starvation. The Tibetan population in 1978 was nearly a half million less than the pre-1959 total. Simultaneously, millions of Chinese were encouraged to come to Tibet, soon outnumbering Tibetans in the major towns and cities.

As a further check to the Tibetan population increase, Tibetan women were forced to take Chinese husbands, and those who refused were sterilized, sometimes before child-birth. On the ideological plain, for mainland institutes for indoctrination.

If in spite of this the Tibetans continue to resist assimilation into China and protest against the later's presence in their nation, it is as much a failure of the communist system as the triumph of the Tibetans themselves. But the odds are stacked against them, and no one knows this better than the Dalai Lama and his advisors in Mcleod Ganj.

It was, on part, this anxiety to salvage what little remained of Tibet that made the Dalai Lama offer the historic concessions to China, its retention of foreign affairs and defence in a future Tibet at the Strasbourg convention in 1988. Predictably, China's rulers under no pressure to accede, ignored it. Any future offer, unless the world community puts its weight behind it, will most likely, meet the same fate.

## Another look at Sino-Indian relations and Tibet

K.P. Bhattacharyya

In Dwijendra Nandi's two-part "Sino Indian Border" (April 4-5, 5-6) it is argued that the Viceroy Hardinge did not accept the McMohan Line. In support is quoted his letter of 23 July 1914 to Crew. However, the letter specifically spoke of the "eastern part of Indo-Chinese portion of the north-eastern frontier" i.e. of the Indian border from Burma to Tibet and not of the Indo-Tibet border, which was decided by the Governments of India and Tibet. This referred also to China's retention of the territories between Salween and Mehong. Formerly administered by Tibet, but occupied by Chao-Erh-Feng in 1908/09.

The article never said a word about Tibet's de facto and de jure independent status in 1914. According to an American author, Rockhill, Tibet was independent from 1910. In a Chinese quarterly, a certain Dr. Gupta is said to have termed the McMohan Line a "British Legacy". India would have been benefitted by his opinion of the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906 to the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 to which neither India nor Tibet was a signatory. Were they not a British legacy?

The irony of the fact is that the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906 lapsed with the fall of Manchu rule in 1910-11 and it was never revived. The St Petersburg (Anglo-Russian) convention of 1907 was denounced by the USSR on January 14, 1918. These two documents which created the myth of Chinese suzerainty were no more extant.

Nandi has again tried to distort facts with a view to creating an impression that McMohan was transferred out of India following his differences with Hardinge over the terms of the Simla Convention 1914. The assumption is wrong. McMohan was an army captain when he headed the Afghan-Baluch boundary commission during 1894-96. He left for the European war front when Great Britain declared war against Germany on August 4, 1914, just a month after the signing of the Simla Convention.

The myth of Chinese suzerainty was built on British fear of Russia and its possible invasion of India. In 1917 Made St. Genie put up a plan for Catherine's consideration. In 1800, a joint expedition against India was discussed by Emperor Paul and Napoleon. In 1870 Napoleon suggested to Alexander a joint invasion. In 1888 a Russian railway line was completed up to Samarkhand. As a matter of fact, the last quarter of the 19th century witnessed a Russian advance right up to the Indian Border.

### Rumors rife

Prjevalsk, a Russian explorer, toured the Lob Nor area in 1876, 1883 and again in 1885 and rumors were rife in 1989 that Russia was establishing a railway link with eastern Sinkiang. John Ardagh, Director of Military Intelligence wrote: "Unless we secure the reversion of Lhasa, we may find the Russians there before us". Another British explorer, Bower, reported that "two hundred men and a couple of mountain guns could take Lhasa and that the number of Russians there would be sufficient to cause restlessness among the natives of Calcutta". In October 1900, Hardinge from St. Petersburg reported that the Tzar gave audience to Dorjief, the Dalai Lama's representative at Yalta on October 15.

The British Government got so panicky that in 1893 it ceded Wakhan Valley to Afghanistan to make it a buffer between Russia and India and then Younghusband's expedition to Lhasa was undertaken in 1904, when Russo-Japanese relations reached its lowest ebb.

The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 was signed when Russia suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Japan and negotiated a treaty, India and China signed the agreement on totally different considerations. Britain was aware that so long as Sinkiang (then practically a Russian protectorate) remained a Chinese province, India's northern border would be protected by two buffer states Sinkiang and Tibet.

China took it as a morale-booster, since it had suffered a number of defeats earlier against Japan in 1895 and again in the Boxer War of 1900. It served two purposes of China, by salvaging some prestige lost in earlier defeats and allaying fear of Tibet being annexed by India following the 1904 expedition.

The St. Petersburg Convention was at a time when Russia had not recovered from the shock of defeat in the Japan War (1906). Britain was worried that the Russian advance in the east having been ably checkmated by Japan. Russia might turn its attention to Central Asia of which Sinkiang, Tibet and Mongolian formed the triangle. The British considered it better to get Russia acquiescence to the suzerainty of a weak China over Tibet than leaving it at the mercy of mighty Russia.

Russia on the other hand was similarly alarmed at the growing military power of Japan in the east and thought it safe to play China against Japan. The convention offered the opportunity. Russia, therefore, readily agreed to Chinese suzerainty in preference to British occupation of Tibet. The convention between Britain and Russia was signed on September 23, 1907.

The myth of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet had at its root the fear complex of the three big powers, British, China and Russia and at the surface the machinations of two wily old foxes of the east and west. China accomplishes the task by killing the Dalai Lama (8th to 12th) before they attained majority, and the British by propagating Chinese suzerainty to the world at large by the agreements/ conventions of 1890, 1893, 1906 and 1907. Neither India nor Tibet was a

signatory to either the 1906 or 1907 convention. But, this British action emboldened China to attack Tibet in 1908 within a year of the Anglo-Russia convention. After three years of bloody war, China's General Chao-Erh-Feng occupied Lhasa in 1910 due to British betrayal in refusing to supply arms to the Tibetans. The story was reenacted by the India Government in 1949-50.

But the Chinese victory was shortlived. In 1911, the Tibetans revolted and Chao-Erh-feng was killed in Lhasa. China suffered defeat in the war that followed. All Chinese troops in Tibet were taken prisoner, along with civilians. On December 23rd 1912, the Chinese Government wrote to the Government of India that it had no intention of converting Tibet into another province of China. On this specific assurance Chinese prisoners were allowed to return to China through Calcutta in January 1913.

Thus, Tibet was an independent country at the time of the Simla Convention in October 1913. China's withdrawal from the convention in 1914 cannot be treated as isolation without considering developments in Europe. Asia was a window of European politics. What was going to happen in Europe could be easily discerned from the political maneuvering of Russia or British in the east. Russian policy was to keep Britain engaged in the East to make it weak in Europe.

By the beginning of 1912 it became clear that war is inevitable in Europe. Because of her involvement in the Boer war (1899-1902) and subsequently political unrest in India and Ireland it was rumored that Britain was unlikely to get itself involved in Europe. France was left weak after Sedan. Russia was therefore apprehensive that it might have to bear the brunt of any German-Austrian thrust.

Russia which had signed a secret treaty with Japan in 1910-11 acknowledging Japan's interest in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, signed a new agreement with China in November 1913 accepting Chinese interest in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria as a means of safeguarding its fear.

### **Simla Conference:**

The British Government was keen on discussion with China to have an idea of its talk with Russia and also to find a solution to Sino-Tibet disputes. Britain feared a Russian attack on Tibet due to Dorjief's repeated visits to Russia and Prjevalsky's reconnoitring of Tibet. China was waiting for such a dialogue to prevent Britain recognizing Tibet's independence after the defeat of Chinese army in 1911. So a tripartite conference was convened in Simla on October 13, 1913. It started under the chairmanship of the Indian plenipotentiaries participating in the conference were Lonchen Shatra (Tibet) and China's Chen I-fan (Ivan Chen).

The boundary between India and Tibet was settled after threadbare discussions between India and Tibet with the Chinese plenipotentiary in attendance. But when the boundary between Tibet and China was dealt with McMohan playing the role of mediator China and Tibet put up such varying claims that it was not possible to reconcile them. So following the example of the Sino-Russian treaty of 1913 on Mongolia, Tibet was divided into two zones, Outer Tibet (autonomous) and the Inner Tibet (Semi-autonomous yielding dual control). The areas were defined by the "Inner" and "Outer" line. It was these lines that China disputed. These disputes about the Sino-Tibet border (inner and outer lines), was later converted into a Indo-Tibet boundary issue by China calling it the McMohan line to confuse the world.

However, the draft convention was initialled by the three plenipotentiaries on June 27, 1914. Meanwhile the political scene in Europe took a sudden turn for the worse over the murder of Francis Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo in Serbia on June 28, 1914, plunging Europe into war. China immediately withdrew from the convention knowing that Britain could not stay away from the war. On July 3, 1914 an agreement was signed between India and Tibet releasing Tibet of its obligation to acknowledge Chinese suzerainty till China signed the convention.

China aware that the convention of 1906 and the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 had become dead documents then tried to decide the question of suzerainty in the battlefield. It attacked Tibet in 1917. However the valiant Tibetans fought tooth and nail and drove the Chinese troops beyond their 1720 border. In the summer of 1918, the Tibetan army penetrated deep into China proper and the Chinese Government frantically appealed to the British Consular Agent Techman to intervene. Truce was arranged through the mediation of Consul Techman and agreements were signed between Tibet and China in August and October 1918.

It will be further noted that the Ledo road to China ( Stilweil's Road) fell to Japan in 1944. The British and American request to build a new supply route through Tibet was turned down by the Tibetan Government. It was on a personal appeal to the Dalai Lama by President Roosevelt that convoys were later permitted to cross through Tibet under Tibetan escort up to the Chinese border.

It is for this reason that China has now antedated its claim of suzerainty (later sovereignty at the consent of India) over Tibet as Chenghiz's conquest. Unfortunately he was a Mongol and a conqueror of China as much as of Tibet, China has no other right over Tibet than the right of a conqueror, the right of a Chenghiz. According to the principal of "resist transit cum suaouere" treaties of the extinct state covering the boundary lines remain valid, and all rights and duties arising out of such treaties of the extinct state devolve on the absorbing state (Oppenheim's international law-vol 1).

The Indo-Tibet border was decided between India and Tibet at the Simla Convention 1914. China is the absorbing country and as such should respect the present boundary, failing which, India should treat Tibet as an Independent country under the Simla Convention. No doubt it is a matter that concerns the Tibetan people. It is a land-locked country and it cannot survive without the help of its neighbors India's refusal to help Tibet lead to Tibet's subjugation. If we cannot now help Tibet in its struggle for independence, we can at least refrain from driving (the) last nail into its coffin. Better are stale-

mate than ignoble compromise.

*Statesman, Delhi May 10, 1988*

## **The tragedy of Tibet (Sino-Indian relationship and Tibet)**

**Keshave Dev Sharma**

The news of imposition of marshall law in Tibet by the Chinese must have come as a shock to any sane and responsible person in the world. Many in the Government of India may not like it, but the fact is that this fresh series of atrocities in Tibet has come aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi's visit of "assurance" to China and the death of Panchen Lama.

Indian citizens are part of a civilization in which providing shelter and protection to the helpless is an integral way of life. It is not accidental that there are millions in India who have a genuinely serious concern about the fate of Tibet by the Chinese. Incredible as it may sound, the fact is that the Chinese have been emboldened by the "assurance" Rajiv Gandhi gave them during his recent visit there that India regards Tibet as a part of China and that India will not interfere in the internal affairs of China. This is not only betrayal of the brave though helpless people of Tibet but also indelible mark of shame on the forehead of those who profess to live by the glorious Indian civilization. Anyone who thinks that Tibet is, or at any time was, a part of China must have his/her head examined quickly.

As a student of history and as a well-informed researcher in international affairs, it is my bounden duty to place some of the most crucial facts before the people of India and Tibet for the benefit of the British trained and British controlled government of India bureaucrats and for the education of the usurping Chinese.

A study of the history of the region north of the Himalayas would give us one irrefutable fact: Tibet was never a part of China. The Chinese occupation of Tibet is not only illegal but today immoral and against the known principles of a world order that respects the sovereignty of individual nation states. Even when the Ching dynasty adopted expansionist policies during 1644-1911, Tibet maintained its sovereignty. The Ching dynasty, as is well known, was established by a non-Chinese people, the Manchus. The Ming were toppled despite loyalist resistance and the Ching established full control. They however could not conquer the region of Tibet although they established a small protectorate there.

And then, of course, came the British with their grand trafficking of opium, a trade they have never given up since. To this day the Chinese and the British, their governments, their business persons and their banks, are heavily involved in the 400 billion dollars a year narcotics trade throughout the world. The British destroyed the Ching dynasty by bringing opium from India to the Middle East something they are doing these days to the U.S. and Western Europe. By 1830, opium imports had outstripped the Chinese exports of tea and silk, and a drain of silver out of China began which finally impoverished the state finances. The famed silk route ultimately gave way to the dreaded opium drain. As the Ching Empire disintegrated, Hong Kong was ceded to the British and peripheral states like Nepal, Burma, Laos, Tongking, the Ryukus and Korea reclaimed their territories which had been forcibly taken away from them earlier. With the complete collapse of the Ching Empire in 1912 China had absolutely no control whatsoever over Tibet and Mongolia. Tibet continued to be an autonomous state since.

The forcible occupation of Tibet by China in 1950 and the expulsion of the Dalai Lama in 1959 was part of a British plan to weaken India and destroy Nehru. That the British favored China over India is too well known to be restated here. The inclusion of China as a permanent member of the United Nations was a part of this favoritism. However, the larger British objective has been to pre-

vent India from becoming an economically developed nation. The British wanted India to be a permanently backward country. It was not nothing that they promoted "mahatma" Gandhi for nearly 50 years to enforce low technology and policies of economic backwardness in India.

Nehru could not guarantee to the British a completely impoverished and brutalized population of India despite the unwritten promises he had made to the contrary. In this respect he was too conscientious a person. And although he had jumped into the bandwagon of socialism and communism were the surest guarantees of keeping a nation backward. So he only talked to socialism but in reality embarked upon ambitious plan to modernize India quickly by undertaking massive infrastructure projects.

The British could not stand this. As soon as Nehru announced his modernization plans, the British went back to the drawing boards and engineered the whole scheme to punish him and to prove that his modernization plans had not helped India in any way. They deputed that 20th century monster, Bertrand Russell, on the job. Both Mao Tse Tung and Chou En Lai were students of Russell in the early 30s. The Chinese forcibly annexed Tibet in 1950, and in a massive showdown in 1959 they threw Dalai Lama out and captured the country. Despite frantic calls for help, nobody - yes, nobody helped Tibet. India, France, United States, Soviet Russia. Nobody came to their help. The British had made sure that nobody does.

For quite some time Nehru was unwilling to accept the Chinese capture of Tibet but was later forced by the Mountbattens into saying that India accepted the "Suzerainty, but not the sovereignty, of China over Tibet". Once Tibet was gone, China was the "Official" next door neighbor of India. All the border problems and the ensuing 1962 war followed quite naturally as per the British plan.

Nehru was just too gullible. He never understood that territory of a nation is the most important thing in the world. No culture of the

world is worth a dime. If there is no territory to practice it over. And as far as the British were concerned, he always felt obliged to them for awarding him the Prime Ministership of India without any challenge. So he had no guts to say "no" to the British on any matter whatsoever. However, if the forcible occupation of Tibet had occurred during Mrs. Gandhi's time, China would not have succeeded. Mrs Gandhi would not have done with the Tibetans what she did with the East Pakistan in 1971 and what Zia did with the Afghan refugees only yesterday.

Rajiv's attempt to appease the Chinese by trying to sacrifice Tibet is bound to backfire. Appeasement has never worked. It did not work for Chamberlain and it did not work for Nehru. Nor will it work for Reagan or Rajiv. The history of the world is not that text book struggle between the haves and the have-nots or between the oligarchies and the republicans. History is first and foremost a struggle for keeping or grabbing territory. What is necessary is a commitment to the honor and freedom of Tibet, a determination to transform the tragedy of Tibet into a triumph of the brave.

*Pioneer(Lucknow)March 29, 1889*

## Dalai Lama stirs the west

Daya Kishan Thusu

Tibet, one of the last outputs of colonialism, is once again stirring for independence from China. Many Tibetans believe that with the end of the cold war their cause can now be better understood by the West. To this end, Tibet's spiritual and political leader, the Dalai Lama, has embarked on a diplomatic offensive, visiting Western capitals to gather support for his cause. Meanwhile, reports of suppression of Tibetans and widespread human rights violations still pour in. Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, leads to six million Tibetans. For 40 years, most of them in exile, he has been fighting for independence for his country, which is as big as Western Europe. A non-violent struggle for religious and spiritual rights of Tibetans has continued within Tibet. Bordering two Asian giants, China and India, Tibet was an independent kingdom for centuries. It was a peaceful Buddhist state where most Tibetans lived in a feudal society and the Dalai Lama's word was law.

### Asylum in India

The Chinese revolution of 1949 changed all that when communist troops occupied Tibet. Initially the Dalai Lama worked with the Chinese authorities but, after an uprising in March 1959 in which thousands of Tibetans were killed, the Dalai Lama escaped to asylum in India. A government in exile was established in the northern Indian city of Dharamsala. Most of the 120,000 Tibetan refugees live in India. Tibetan activists claim that under Chinese occupation

thousands of monasteries, containing precious literature and works of art, have been destroyed, the political rights of most Tibetans denied and religious freedom curtailed. In addition, they claim that 7.5 million Chinese now live in Tibet as a result of large-scale resettlement, as against nearly six million Tibetans.

For its part, China claims that the Tibetans are one of the five races of China, and that Tibet has been part of greater China for centuries. It is true that from the 18th century to 1912- year Tibet regained its independence from China after an uprising Chinese influence in Tibet was substantial and it controlled the foreign policy of Lhasa.

Tibetans argue at the time of the communist revolution in China their country had been independent for more than 40 years and was accepted as such by many foreign governments, including Nepal and British India.

China maintains that Tibet has an autonomous status within the People's Republic and the Beijing government has invested huge amounts in developing the economically backward feudal hill state, improving the standards of living for average Tibetans. However, there is little doubt that most Tibetans resent Chinese rule.

Efforts have been made to resolve the Tibet issue through bilateral talks. Direct contact between Beijing and Dharamsala came for the first time in 1979. Two high-level Tibetan delegations visited Beijing in the early Eighties and in 1987 the Dalai Lama proposed a five-point peace plan. Beijing would not accept it.

## **UN resolution**

Internationally, Tibet has been a major human rights issue for years. The United Nations has recognized the Tibetans' right to "self-determination", passing three resolution in 1959, 1961 and 1965 criticizing China for "violation of fundamental rights of the Tibetan people". The award of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai

Lama reminded the international community of the plight of Tibetans. In the last two years he has personally met and sought support from among others, presidents of the United States, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, the British prime minister and leaders of the Baltic States. That diplomacy seems to be showing signs of some success. In a resolution adopted last August by the UN Commission on Human Rights, concern was expressed about "violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms that threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people". This is the first UN resolution on Tibet since 1965. Moreover last October the US Congress declared Tibet an "occupied country". The end of the East-West ideological confrontation gives new hope to solving regional conflicts all around the globe. The Tibetan leadership has tried to lobby support from the West, putting its case in front of international public opinion to pressurize China to grant self-rule to Tibet.

Already democracy is on top of the Tibetan agenda. The Tibetan Parliament in Exile, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) has been elected on the basis of one man vote. And, for the first time, ministers to the Tibetan Cabinet or Kashag were elected by the members of the Assembly rather than nominated by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama told a press conference in London in early December that a constituent assembly will decide a constitutional framework for a new Tibet which will have a parliamentary system, secularism and a mixed economy. However, given the nature of international politics, no dramatic change in Tibet is on the cards. The cause of Independence is low on the major powers' agenda. And China is too powerful a country to worry much about the western accusations of human rights violations in Tibet. Besides, Tibet is of great strategic significance for Beijing, being the site of a major nuclear missile base.

## **Optimistic**

China has reasons to be optimistic. The US gave Beijing the Most

Favored Nation (MFN) trading status after the Tiananmen Square events of 1989, when hundreds of students were killed in anti-government demonstrations.

The crux of the issue is geoeconomic. Critics see interesting parallels between Kuwait's occupation by Iraq in August 1990 and the current political situation in Tibet. Unlike Kuwait, where foreign invasion was repulsed by force, Tibet does not possess oil.

The occupation of Kuwait was ended within 40 weeks. The Chinese occupation of Tibet is 40 years old and until now no serious international effort has been made to restore the legitimate government in Lhasa.

*News Time(Hyderabad) January 13, 1995*

## **Tibet's cry of despair**

**Shubha Singh**

Although the Chinese Government tried to deprive the Dalai Lama of a formal platform at the World Human Rights Conference, the Tibetan spiritual leader made his presence felt in Vienna with a wider audience at the non-governmental level. Chinese delegates objected to the Dalai Lama's presence at the conference, but an agreement was worked out whereby he addressed the non-governmental organizations even though this meeting was still under the auspices of the conference organizers. The Dalai Lama and his cause have retained international interest despite long years he has spent fighting for it. Mainly because of the Tibetan people's resolution in fighting the domination by the Chinese in their own homeland.

The Dalai Lama met President Bill Clinton during his recent visit to Washington, even though the Americans resorted to the convoluted stratagem of the President dropping in at Vice-President Al Gore while the Dalai Lama was visiting the latter. In London, the Dalai Lama met the British Prime Minister, John Major. Not many world leaders are prepared to actually commit their support to Tibet as yet, but many of them are prepared to listen. Tibet remains in the news because of the periodic disturbances in Lhasa and the repressive manner in which the Chinese authorities try to suppress them.

The Central Tibetan Administration of the Dalai Lama recently released a white paper called *Tibet - Proving Truth From Facts*. This is the Tibetans' response to the Chinese white paper released last

year, titled Tibet - Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation.

The Tibetan white paper not only documents the various acts of the Chinese authorities in Tibet in the past decades, but also questions the Chinese use of the term ownership in the context of Tibet. The Tibetan white paper says that the Chinese rule in Tibet is "profoundly colonialist" in nature.

The Chinese themselves view Tibet in colonial terms, they say. "This attitude is evident already from the Chinese Government's white paper, which refers to the "ownership" of Tibet. If Tibet were truly an integral part of China for hundreds of years, as China claims. Tibet could not form the object of "ownership" by the country it is already part of. The very notion of "ownership" of Tibet by China is colonialist and imperialist in nature," according to the Tibetan white paper. Over 1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet, the white paper said about the human rights situation there. About 70 percent of the inmates of prisons and labor camps in Tibet have died, according to figures compiled through the testimony of survivors. In Tibet, torture is the only known and expected method of interrogating prisoners, the white paper said. Incommunicado detention in Tibet is almost routine, according to the white paper. Grounds of arrest have been found in any kind of activity. Tibetans have been arrested for speaking with foreigners, singing patriotic songs, putting up wall posters, possessing an autobiography of the Dalai Lama or a video or audio cassette on him, or for preparing a list of casualties during the Chinese crackdown on demonstrations, or plotting and advising friends to wear the traditional Tibetan costume on the Chinese National Day.

The Tibetans have claimed that the Chinese authorities were bringing Han settlers into Tibet and at the same time employing coercive birth control measures to stem the growth of the Tibetan population. The twin demographic policy was aimed at reducing the Tibetans to an insignificant minority in their country so that any resistance against Chinese rule would become ineffective. The popula-

tion of about half of Tibet has been merged into neighboring Chinese provinces, they have been deprived - completely of their political identity and rendered an insignificant minority of the electorates in their own land.

From 1983 onwards there had been a sharp increase in the transfer of Chinese settlers to Central Tibet. In Lhasa alone there were 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese residents in 1985, from 1985 to 1988 additional Chinese immigrants doubled the population of Lhasa. To encourage Chinese settlers in Tibet, Beijing offers an array of benefits and facilities, including special tax exemptions and low interest rates for entrepreneurs. The Tibetan white papers charges the Chinese authorities of "genocide," that is, destroying the environment. China is reported to have stationed approximately 90 nuclear warheads in Tibet. The Ninth Academy, China's North-West Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy, is reported to have dumped an unknown quantity of radioactive waste on the Tibetan plateau, according to the white paper.

The Ninth Academy is the most secret organization in China's entire nuclear programme - it was responsible for designing all of China's nuclear bombs through the mid-seventies, it served as a research center for detonation development, radiochemistry as well as assembled components of nuclear weapons. It still remains an important and high security military weapons plant. According to some reports, China carried out what is termed "chemical defence manoeuvre in the high altitude zone to test newly-developed equipment."

Deforestation is a growing problem in Tibet. Most of Tibet's forests grow on steep, isolated slopes of the river valleys in the low-lying south-eastern region. The felling of trees has led to the denudation of the hill sides. Regeneration is minimal due to the extreme degree of the land slope, soil and moisture, wide fluctuation in day and night temperature and high soil surface temperatures. By 1985 timber extraction in Tibet had totalled 1,442 million cubic meters, which was 40 percent of the stock in 1949.

*Pioneer (New Delhi) June 28, 1993*

## Now for an open Tibet?

Amrita Abraham

There were startling reports from Beijing a week ago saying the Chinese authorities were going to open Tibet completely to the world. Apparently the regional communist party and the Chinese government decided on July 14, according to an official journal, the Tibet Daily, to "turn from a closed or semi-closed economy to active participation in domestic and international commerce".

Specifically, this means opening Tibet to foreign investment, setting up direct air links with Beijing, Kathmandu and Hong Kong, promoting tourism and expanding border trade with India and other countries. (Border trade with India was resumed a few weeks ago in the Pithoragarh region), the Agency France Press, one of several news agencies picking up the Tibet Daily reports, said this daring reform was aimed at promoting economic prosperity and weakening ethnic separatism. The impetus came from Mr. Deng Xiaoping's pro-reform swing through southern China in spring this year, which put new life into the reformists in the mainland.

The decision is startling because as late as May and June this year, the Western press was carrying reports about a resurgence of the pro-independence movement in Tibetan cities and reliable signs of it, for the first time, in rural Tibet as well as repressive measures by the authorities. Conventional wisdom about China is that the last thing the authorities would do in such circumstances is to allow foreign tourists and the media free access to Tibet.

## "China's Tibet"

As test of the "new China's resolve to shed, after nearly four decades of communist rule, Mao's legacy of totalitarianism, the treatment of Tibetans is, perhaps more important in the eyes of the rest of the world than any other single issue. Three decades after the abortive Lhasa uprising, the protest and demonstrations in the last 18 months in that city make it clear that Tibetans hate Han Chinese rule just as intensely now as they did in march 1959 and are just as prepared to sacrifice their lives to draw the world attention to their plight, as they did then in challenging the military power of the people's liberation army. Perhaps it does not occur to Chinese leaders, who never fail to bring up the late emperor Hirohito's and Japan's responsibility for the crimes committed against their people before 1945, that their own suppression of the Tibetans is as ruthless today as it was during the period since the Khampa rebellions of the mid-fifties. And that they and the Chinese communist party will have to answer at the bar of history and to the conscience of the world, for their crimes against a defenseless people, just as surely as the Russian and the CPSU have to answer for the crimes of stalin, and as Germans still have to answer for Hitler's evils.

For more than three decades Han Chinese settlers have been pushed into Tibet as a deliberate strategy to make an irreversible shift in the Tibet "Autonomous" Regions ethnic balance. It is estimated that more than 7 million civilians have been sent into Tibet in addition to which the PLA maintains garrison of 250,000 troops in the region. Thus Han Chinese already outnumber the Tibetans on the Tibetan plateau, where the Tibetan population is estimated to be no more than six million. This Tibetan population would have been large but for the Chinese occupation of the country. Statistics show that about 1.2 million persons died between 1956 and 1976 of whom 433,000 are estimated to have been killed as a result of military operations, 343,000 died as a result of famine, 174,000 during imprisonment, 157,000 were executed, 93,000 tortured to death and 9,000 committed suicide. In addition 120,000 are exiles, 100,000

of them refugees in India.

A systematic attempt to destroy the distinct Tibetan identity, culture and religion was made after 1956. Even before the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), 80 percent of all religious, historic and cultural buildings, monuments, artifacts and books were destroyed. Those which were left were either sold for foreign exchange in the Tokyo and Hong Kong antique markets or destroyed in the Cultural Revolution, at the end of which only 13 religious monuments out of several thousand had survived.

Since 1976 and the advent of Deng Xiao Peng's reforms the Chinese authorities have attempted to mollify the Tibetans. A degree of religious freedom was allowed and some monasteries restored. The policy on the migration of Han Chinese into Tibet was reversed, only to be changed again in 1983. And new economic measures somewhat improved living standards, but not enough to lift Tibetans up to living standards enjoyed in China. Contact was established with the Dalai Lama and two fact finding missions sent by him were allowed to tour parts of Tibet. The rest of the world began to get a closer look at what was happening, when tourist groups and journalists were allowed into Lhasa regularly, as part of the new Chinese policy of opening up to west. All this catalyses expectations of far reaching change in young Tibetans, which the Chinese authorities did not anticipate. At the sametime the Dalai Lama put forward proposals for real autonomy for Tibet. This implied a recognition of Chinese sovereignty, paving the way for discussions between Chinese representatives and the Dalai Lama. The talks have not so far taken place because the Chinese refuse to discuss the proposals with the Dalai Lama's representatives, demanding instead that the Dalai Lama come to the negotiating table himself. These difficulties with protocol and procedural wrangles have so far cost hundreds of lives, which does no good to China in the eyes of the world. The Tibetans understand only too well that their salvation lies in arousing international public opinion, so that the commemoration in China for the first time last year of International Human

Right's Day became an occasion in Lhasa for a demonstration which resulted in the police shooting at unarmed monks and killing four of them.

The death of the Panchen Lama leaves the Dalai Lama as the only mediator between the Tibetan people and the Chinese state. If China is to make amends to the Tibetan people for the horror of the last four decades it has no option but to enter into serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama in the context of the Tibetan people's "inalienable right to determine our own destiny in freedom".

*Sunday Mail December 3, 1989*

## The agony of Tibet

Bireswar Mukerjee

Tibet has been the focus of the world media for quite sometime now. The forbidden land of the lamas has been reeling under the onslaught of the Chinese drive for the so-called integration of the Tibetans with their motherland ever since the fifties, and more so during the days of the "cultural revolution" at the behest of the "gang of four". The whole world has been indifferent to the woes of Tibet, as was the case with the Baltic States of the erstwhile Soviet Union for over four decades.

India had played the anchor role in legitimizing the integration of Tibet into mainstream China in the euphoric days of Panchsheel, the milestone of Sino-Indian relationship during the fifties. Till then, India had constantly stood by her commitment and the principles stand on Tibet inspite of the 1962 debacle and subsequent cooling down of relationship with China. Now with standing Jawarhalal Nehru's final remarks on the future of Tibet in the Lok Sabha on December 7, 1950 that none other than the Tibetans themselves would have a final say on their own future India had chosen not to reverse her earlier stand on Tibet although it had ample scope to play the Tibetan card in the face of the growing Sino-Pak nexus in the seventies.

It is difficult to assess what the Chinese perception about India's Tibet policy was, but there is no doubt that it suited the Chinese very well, and perhaps made them a little complacent on the vexed question of which being an integral part of China, which from their

points of view, had been solved once and for all.

India's hesitant mood is to some extent understandable in the face of her own compulsions in Kashmir and Panjab. But the vexed question of Tibet's independence is a different proposition altogether, as never in the past had been Tibet considered to be within the ambit of Chinese nationhood. There is no doubt that there were attempts in the past by the Chinese rulers to bring Tibet under their control, sometime with limited success, but on the whole the Tibetans had always been maintaining their distinct identity as a separate nation which is quite distinct from the concept of Chinese nationhood as preached by its rulers. The Chinese had always claimed that Tibet was under their "suzerainty" and therefore, should form a part of China. It is a matter of argument whether Mongolia too comes under the same context.

Tibet is unique in her lifestyle, culture and religion, having a distinct geographical entity. It had also managed to maintain a separate political identity in the past. Tibet has always looked towards her southern neighbor for spiritual guidance since the days of "Atish Dipankar" who carried the message of Lord Buddha to the forbidden country centuries ago. Buddhism is still the elixir of life in this spiritual and mystic land called Tibet.

Tibet's agony increased when the Chinese took full control of Tibet, with India actively supporting the so-called integration of Tibetans into the Chinese nationhood. This happened at a critical juncture in history, when the young Communist China regime was not so revered by the western power-block. The so-called annexation of Tibet by China had, in fact, upset the geo-political perceptions of south and Central Asia, that proved to be disastrous in the not-too-distinct future from the Indian point of view. The reasons for which the British Government had felt the need for keeping Tibet as a protectorate buffer state between India and China, failed to convince the Indian policy planners at that time, perhaps for the sake of Afro-Asian solidarity, India was more concerned about her border became vulnerable to potential threats, which otherwise had been

calm till then.

The Chinese occupation of Tibet and her attempt to tighten the grip over the Tibetans was bound to have its fall out over India, that culminated in the eventful fleeing of the Dalai Lama and his seeking refuge in India. The events that were to follow are too well known to be repeated again. Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as it is known today to the outside world, does not represent the total geographical entity of the land mass what once known as Tibet, but only a part of it. Before the so-called integration of Tibet with China, Tibet consisted of three provinces: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. What is known as TAR today is the U-Tsang province only. The North-Eastern Amdo province was bifurcated. One part consisting of Kokonor region has been made a separate province of China and renamed as Qinghai; the other part has been merged with the neighboring Chinese province of Gansu. The fate of the eastern province of Kham is no better either. Most of its part has been merged with the neighboring Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan and Gansu. So what was once known as Tibet now stands splintered with its parts renamed and some merged into adjoining Chinese provinces.

The Chinese also pursued a shrewd policy of demographic 'Sinicization' of Tibet right from the beginning. As a result, where there was a very negligible Chinese population in the whole of Tibet in 1950, today in Qinghai province alone the Chinese outnumber the Tibetans in the ratio 3:1. In the former Amdo province, the Chinese population is now nearly equal to the Tibetans. The situation in the central Tibet (TAR) is no better either. Since the so-called integration of Tibet into China, the domination of 'Han' Chinese has upset Tibet's religio-political balance. Over 1.2 million Tibetans have lost their lives since the Chinese takeover. Thousands of monasteries have been razed to the ground. Lamas and ordinary Tibetans alike were forced into labor camps. The cultural revolution under the leadership of the "Gang of four" caused irreversible damage and harm to the Tibetans. Virtually it was a slaughter of human sensibilities in this unique and mystic land. The helpless,

subjugated Tibetans continued to reel under overwhelming Chinese domination. The onslaught was noticeable in all spheres of Tibetan life which played a havoc with the religion-orientation Tibetan lifestyle. The persecution of Tibetans probably was aimed at the annihilation of Tibet's distinct identity and culture. It is needless to elaborate further, as all these have become part of history by now.

Another aspect of Chinese manoeuvre in Tibet, is that once the peaceful land of the Lamas has been converted into fortress of awesome Chinese military machine. About 300,000 to 500,000 Chinese troops have been stationed in Tibet alone, which includes ICBM and IRBMS (being a potential threat to Indian defence installations and Indian navel fleet in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean). There are also reports that the Chinese have dumped nuclear wastes in Tibet, which is a matter of concern for all.

However, it appears that world opinion is gradually showing more and more concern on the issue of Tibet. The Dalai Lama's tireless efforts in this regard have not gone in vain as the awareness on Tibet continues to grow today on a much larger scale than ever before. The world conference on Tibet in 1990 evoked much larger responses as, besides that the observers from East Europe and the Scandinavian countries also attended the conference. The famous Strasbourg proposal made by Dalai Lama in 1988 while addressing the members of the European Parliament indicating the maximum concession to the Chinese, i.e abandonment of demands for full independence for Tibet, has been shunned by the Chinese. (The Dalai Lama had since announced the withdrawal of the offer on August 19 last year in Switzerland, as China has not responded), the Tibetan question is gradually gaining legitimacy among the world capitals. The Dalai Lama met the President of Austria and the foreign ministers of France and Switzerland last August. However, of all these, the Dalai Lama's meeting with Prime Minister John Major and President George Bush has assumed much significance in the context of the emerging new world order vis-a-vis the issue of

violation of human rights in Tibet.

With the changed international scenario, one cannot ignore the events that have recently swept Central Asia, the Baltic States and Eastern Europe. The demise of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the virtual collapse of the Yugoslav Federation are indicative of the fact mere ideological rhetoric and artificial jargon are not sufficient to keep various nationalities together within the framework of a multi-ethical state structure. China, as it appears today, is the last bastion of such a regime, trying its utmost to hold on to a system that had become obsolete. There are also indications that democratic reforms in China will gain pace once the older generation of leaders and ideologies quit the political scene. It is too early to predict the future change in the political scenario in China vis-a-vis Tibet.

But there is no doubt that Tibet has become the focus of attention of the China-watchers today. The exiled Tibetans in India and abroad pin their hopes on the hypothesis that China is destined to go the Soviet Union's way, which will usher in a new era of hope for Tibet. The question that has now assumed significance is: Will perestroika ever dawn on Tibet autonomy.

### **Hopes revived in Tibet**

There may still be some hope for Tibet. If the reports about the Chinese government willing to negotiate with the Dalai Lama over the future of Tibet carried by the official "Beijing Review" magazine are true, then despite the recent riots and the subsequent crackdown by the government at Lhasa, the Tibetans can hope to secure more concessions for themselves. Though the Chinese have expressed similar desire in the past about meeting the Dalai Lama, the statement issued on Monday makes a radical departure from the earlier stand as much as it allows the spiritual head of the Tibetans to choose the venue of his own liking. However the precondition of not allowing a foreigner to be present during the talks still remains, signifying that Beijing continues to view the Tibetan problem as an

internal matter which brooks no outside interference. At the same time, the Chinese have made it clear that there cannot be any talks on the independence for the region. But that as it may, the fact that Beijing wants to settle the problem immediately after fierce riots broke out in the capital Lhasa prior to the 30th anniversary of the abortive coup attempt in 1959, clearly indicates that China is willing to forget the attempts to create disturbances and ignore other provocations by the pro- independence elements. This pragmatism is perhaps partly guided by the fact that Beijing genuinely wants to win over the Tibetans as also the compulsions arising out of the winds of change blowing throughout the communist world which is guaranteeing more personal freedom to individuals and greater decentralization of power.

The latest stand taken by Beijing may also have been guided by the statement made by the late Panchen Lama official protege of the Chinese Government that despite some impressive gains since 1959, the price paid for such a progress was too high in the long run, implying thereby that the official Chinese policy has been too harsh. Yet, the Tibetans would be well advised not to pursue a confronting attitude despite the flexibility shown by the Chinese government. In fact, the recent riots may as well have jeopardized a direct dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Beijing. However, the authorities in Beijing should be given credit for not holding the recent development in Lhasa against the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama on his part has already accepted that Beijing would be allowed to exercise control over matters of defence, foreign policy, currency and transport in return for total autonomy to the Tibetans in culture and religion aspects. Thus the spiritual of the Tibetans should take advantage of the latest Chinese offence.

*Sentinel (Gauhati) March 15, 1989*

### **Dalai Lama's gesture**

In spelling out his five-point peace plan for Tibet in his address to

European Parliament earlier this week, the Dalai Lama has taken a significant step towards seeking peaceful settlement of an issue that has been increasingly obliterated from public mind over the last 38 years. By inviting China to negotiations to make Tibet a "self-governing democratic political entity in association with the PRC", the Dalai Lama has affirmed his willingness to surrender Tibetan "sovereignty" in exchange for a self-governing status within China. The considerable concession the Tibetan temporal and spiritual head has offered is likely to disappoint many of his compatriots and followers as also those who have for about two score years lent support to Tibetan "nationalism". The compulsion that led the Dalai Lama to make the conciliatory gestures are not quite clear. He may have been impelled into taking the initiative by a desire to secure a Tibetan settlement within his own lifetime. Or, was it that the failure of last year's Lhasa uprising to evoke worldwide support to the extent expected and place Tibet on the centre-stage at international fora caused the Dalai Lama to reformulate his positions on his homeland?

Whatever the causative factors, the Tibetan spiritual leader now appears to have pinned his hopes on China itself for a settlement. His anxieties and concerns are understandable. For, with over a lakh of his fellow-Tibetans, he has spent close to forty years in exile in this country. But whether China will respond positively to his peace plan and a settlement on a region of considerable strategic importance cannot be stated with any greater degree of certainty and confidence than one can predict the outcome of its on-going border talks with India. Any expectation, even hope, that China would enter into serious negotiations on Tibet, granting the region autonomy, would appear misplaced, given the former's relentless pursuit of its perceived national, geo-political interests and its easy resort to double-standards to further them. Beijing, for example, has for long been exerting pressure on Moscow for a Vietnamese pullout from Kampuchea, which needed fraternal assistance in the aftermath of Pol Pot's genocidal horrors. This was indeed the price Beijing quoted for improved Sino-Soviet relations. But then it has

not even considered using its leverage with Islamabad to get vacated Pakistan's occupation of part of Jammu and Kashmir, even though such a goodwill gesture could go a long way in facilitating improvement of its own relations with India. Apparently, not any principled opposition to presence of foreign troops or even forcible occupation but furtherance of its own geo-political interests and great power ambitions weighs more with China.

The incongruities in China's attitudes and policies are too glaring to be ignored by anyone hoping to negotiate peaceful, workable solutions of disputes with it. Talking to Beijing, as experience of any country engaged in the exercise for any length of time would suggest, is as arduous and treacherous a task as the trek through the Himalayas from Lhasa to Dharamsala. The Dalai Lama would have miscalculated gravely if he expected quick and easy results commensurate with his gesture at accommodation with China. Or if he hoped for support from such "friends" as the US, whose shrill protests on Tibet petered out when President Nixon scaled the Great Wall of China to unfold a great new romance, from which fire is dying out now.

### **An important offer**

The Chinese government has made a **very important offer** to the Dalai Lama. For the first time since 1959 when he left Lhasa to live in exile in India, the Dalai Lama has been told that he can return and live anywhere he chooses, including Tibet, provided he publicly gives up the goal of an independent Tibet. The offer has been made by the Panchen Lama. Obviously he could have done so only at the instance of the highest Chinese authorities. The timing of the statement is significant. It follows the large-scale riots in Tibet recently which revealed the depth of hostility among the ordinary Tibetan to Chinese rule, their strong and enduring loyalty to the Dalai Lama, and the commitment of significant sections of the populace to Tibetan independence. But it is also an indication that the top Chinese leadership wishes to adhere to the new policy of relative autonomy

for Tibet and not to return to the repressive approach of the Maoist period. It is significant that the Panchen Lama has dared contradict the official claim that the police was not armed and give figures of casualties from police firings.

The Dalai Lama has himself said more than once that one must be realistic, thus implying that he may be willing to accept Chinese suzerainty provided other conditions are met. Those conditions are obvious. Beijing must recognize Tibet's autonomy in internal affairs, it must end the policy of settling Hans there with a view to changing the composition of the population, it must allow the Tibetan people to preserve their way of life centered on Lamaist Buddhism and their institutional arrangements headed by the Dalai Lama. All this is easier said than done. An agreement will take long to work out even if it is assumed that both sides are interested in a peaceful resolution of the problem. The present Chinese rulers have the experience of allowing regional autonomy. Indeed, regional autonomy calls for substantial liberalization in the whole of China. On the other side of the fence, the Dalai Lama is under pressure from his people not to settle for anything less than a restoration of the pre 1956 status quo when the Chinese exercised only formal suzerainty over Tibet. But despite these difficulties there is perhaps scope for initiating the process of reconciliation. Again the Chinese will be reluctant to engage in formal negotiations in respect of a region they regard as part of the motherland. But they can be flexible when their interest so demand. Though one must be naive to take an optimistic view of the possibilities, it may be worthwhile for the Dalai Lama to explore how far they are prepared to go. Certainly it is in India's interests to encourage him in that direction. An autonomous Tibet can help promote a border settlement and peace between New Delhi and Beijing.

*Times of India (New Delhi), April 9, 1988*

## Be wary of Chinese overtures

S.P. Seth

Now that the euphoria of President Venkataraman's visit has subsided, it is possible to examine it with objectivity. In the first place, it is not at all clear why a Presidential visit was considered necessary, so soon after Premier Li Peng's trip to this country. In keeping with their usual tradition of making visiting dignitaries of even tiny states feel important, the Chinese government treated President Venkataraman with great pomp and ceremony. This is not to devalue Chinese courtesy to our President, but simply to stress that we shouldn't read too much into it.

Much has also been made of President Shangkun's remark about the need for China and India to come closer to counter "bullying" by other. The reference obviously was to the United States, though no names were mentioned. President Yang's remark was very satisfying for our bruised ego, as it came soon after American bullying to stop the Indo-Soviet rocket deal. It was, therefore, taken to mean that China was signalling some sort of a joint front against the United States. The remark was probably aimed more at Washington than New Delhi. Beijing was simply using the occasion of our President's state visit to settle some verbal scores with the United States for its strong-arm tactics against China on a whole range of issues. In the bilateral context, President Venkataraman's visit hasn't taken New Delhi anywhere nearer a solution of the border question. The Chinese argument that the border problem with India is an "imperial legacy" raises an important question. Which is: how far does a nation go back in history to legitimize its territorial boundaries? For

instance, China's outer periphery (comprising Tibet, Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia etc) was the result of imperial Chinese conquest in their historical past. Does it mean that they too are disputed territories? China doesn't think so.

It is a political illusion to believe that increased economic ties and the border dispute can go hand in hand. It doesn't, however, mean that we shouldn't explore improved relations with China. What it means, though, is that New Delhi should know precisely where India stands in regard to China. Do we fit into the Chinese scheme of things? Beijing, for instance, does not regard India as belonging to the Big League of global powers, which China is by virtue of its nuclear status (India was reminded of this when China tested a 1,000 kiloton atomic bomb during President Venkataraman's China visit), and permanent membership of the Security Council.

At the same time, India cannot simply be wished away because of its size and actual and potential strength. Which makes India, in Chinese eyes, a "hegemon" with its small neighbors. And that China can't allow because New Delhi might start competing with her. Even at the height of Sino-Indian friendship in the mid-fifties (the infamous Bhai Bhai please which President Yang wants to revive), China quite clearly saw a potential conflict of interests with India. According to Professor Rushbrook Williams.

*Indian Express, June 30, 1992*

## The subjugation of shangri-la

D. Parashar

Shangri-la is destined to remain under occupation. Or at least for the time being. The Chinese have it clear that they are in no mood to even consider relaxing their grip on Tibet, which it has held under subjugation since 1950. The hopes of a possible resolution to the 38 year-old Tibet problem that were roused last month by the Dalai Lama's conciliatory speech at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, were quickly dashed by the Chinese government's rejection of his compromise formula. And now relations between Peking and the Tibetan god-king's government in exile at Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, have touched a new low with both sides trading angry statements.

On July 9, the Bureau of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi (an extension of his foreign office) declared that the 17-point agreement of 1951, by which China claims to have given Tibet regional autonomy (and has since ironically called the land an "autonomous region") was a "dead letter". The reason: Tibet had signed it under duress and, in any case, every clause of it had since been "cruelly betrayed" by China. The Bureau added that efforts to find "any practical and comprehensive solution to the Tibetan issue must start afresh and on a new principle of mutual accommodation."

The Bureau was reacting to a statement made by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman rejecting the "one country, two systems" formula that Peking applies to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan on the grounds that Tibet's case was different and that Peking's relations

with Lhasa were governed by the agreement that was signed after Tibet's peaceful liberation." Soon after the Bureau issued its statement, the Chinese Communist Party leader, Zhao Ziyang, told a French TV reporter that the Dalai Lama was welcome to return to China, but only if he stopped working for the independence of Tibet. But he added, he did not see "any sign that he (Dalai Lama) is prepared to do so." Similar statements were also expressed by Wan Li, chairman of the National People's Congress, the parliament of China.

The Chinese reaction appears to have been hysterical and quite out of proportion to what the situation warranted. After all, the June speech of the 14th Dalai Lama, spiritual and temporal leader to six million Tibetans spread the world over, was by far the most conciliatory he had made so far. Addressing an unofficial gathering of members of the European Parliament and newsmen at Strasbourg on June 15, he presented a "five-point peace plan" which would give Tibet self-government but only "in association" with the People's Republic of China. The plan envisages China control over defence and foreign affairs, leaving all other subjects, including the economy, religion and culture, in the hands of Lhasa.

This was not even the first time that the pragmatic god-king had said that he was prepared to accept for Tibet a status that fell short of what the Indian freedom movement called "Purna Swaraj". At the Global Survival Conference of Religious Leaders at Oxford in April this year, he told the assembled audience that he was working for a compromise that gave Tibet a status short of complete independence. In fact, for many years now, he has been saying that the only criterion was the happiness of his people, and a situation which guaranteed cultural and religious autonomy for Tibetans would be welcome. The Dalai Lama realizes that since Chinese overlordship over Lhasa cannot be wished away, it would be best to try to make the most of the liberalism of the new Chinese leadership by matching pragmatism with pragmatism.

Yes, a new chapter in Sino-Tibetan relations was opened with the

change of guard in Peking. Once Deng Xiaoping took over and ushered in a policy of liberalization, Tibet benefitted too. The new leadership admitted that Mao's Tibet policy was all wrong, but of course conveniently blamed it all on the infamous Gang of Four which was at the vanguard of the Cultural Revolution. The destruction of monasteries, the disbanding of lamaseries, the executions and forced labor camps, the attempt at wholesale Sinicisation and the transfer of population, by which today, according to the Dalai Lama, the Hans (the dominant Chinese community) vastly outnumber the native Tibetans on the Roof of the World, were all described to have been the handiwork of the Gang of Four.

Having admitted mistakes, the new regime sought to make amends. Lamaist Buddhism, never really dead, was allowed to make a comeback. So was the Tibetan language. Certain cultural freedoms were also restored and, in general, the oppression was considerably eased. What is more, Radio Lhasa and Radio Peking broadcast appeals to expatriate Tibetans who fled in the wake of the 1959 crackdown (as did the Dalai Lama) to return to the embrace of the motherland.

The Dalai Lama responded in March 1978 by asking China to allow Tibetans living outside to visit Tibet and see things for themselves. Thereafter, several delegates sent by him visited Peking and Lhasa. But their reports were far from encouraging. Only cosmetics changes had been wrought, alleged the Dalai Lama, and most of his people were as unhappy as before. This "delegation diplomacy" practiced by the two sides came a cropper and, while in 1984 and 1985, there was much talk of a visit by the Dalai Lama himself, as distinct from a return, nothing came of it. A large section of Tibetan diaspora opposed the visit on the grounds that would be a wrong and even physically risky move. But the Dalai Lama was not one to let matters rest. He saw and sought to exploit the opportunities offered by the changes in China and India - the passing away of Indira Gandhi allowed him to test the lengths to which the new regime would let his unrecognized emigre government go on conducting political activity on Indian soil. Besides, the younger element

among the Tibetans abroad were getting into singly restive and favored stronger action.

Shedding the xenophobia of his predecessors, the Dalai Lama has been ceaselessly touring the globe, granting interviews, addresses meetings and, of course, tending to the spirit and secular needs of his Tibetan followers which are scattered all over the world. And he never missed a chance to further the cause of freeing his people from bandage. In recent years, he has lobbies strong and hard in America-in congress and among influential individuals like former President Jimmy Carter champion of human rights.

These efforts paid dividends last year. On July 16, the Human Rights sub-committee of US House of Representatives passed a resolution accusing China of committing large-scale violations of human rights in Tibet. This resolution was passed unanimously by the house on July 18. Vastly encouraged by this, the Dalai Lama used his September visit to the US to issue a five-point peace plan. Among other things, this sought complete demilitarization of Tibet and respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental rights and democratic freedom, and commencement negotiations to determine the future status of Tibet. Around the same time, Washington Post editorially asked America "to speak up for Tibet" and eight influential political leaders including the chairman of House and Senate Committees on foreign reaction drew the attention of Zhioa Ziyang to the Dalai Lama's peace plan and continuing human rights violations in Tibet.

It was hardly surprising then that the smelt. US government when anti-government riots broke out in Lhasa late in September and continued for the two weeks. These riots were led by Buddhist monks. That China determined to crush any rebellion is evident from the recent that it has set up a special unit of the military police to handle future pro-freedom disturbances in Tibet. But Peking would be gravely mistaken if it thinks can continue to keep Tibet under jack-boots for very long.

*Sentinel(Gauhati) June 23, 1988*

## **Saving Tibet: Try old-fashioned diplomacy**

**A.G. Noorani**

The loud noises made by some self-styled and self-serving champions of Tibet in India and abroad should not deflect attention from a fact of cardinal importance, namely, that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been in contact with China since 1978 through his elder brother, Mr. Gyalio Thundup, a very acceptable interlocutor to Beijing. The gulf has narrowed. The Chinese are prepared to discuss any issue but Tibet's independence. The Dalai Lama is ready to drop the demand for independence.

The Dalai Lama himself is realist! "We cannot throw them out". By shouting slogans and burning effigies you cannot achieve freedom. They (impatient Tibetan) call me silly, but I think I am not silly but being realistic," he said in a Press interview on March 18, 1989. His terms were "autonomy within China. But only if we are genuinely equal" a negotiated and guaranteed autonomy.

Tibet's plight is heart-rending. Time always runs in favor of the party in occupation. Hence the need for an expeditious reconciliatory process. India cannot serve as a mediator. Quite apart from its embroilment in Kashmir, China would simply not hear from India any music except on the score written out in joint communiques at China's instance.

## A mediator

The USA might have served as a mediator. On November 19, 1993 at Seattle, President Bill Clinton urged President Jiang Zemin to negotiate on Tibet. He was told that the Chinese were willing to meet the Dalai Lama as long as Tibet's independence was not discussed. Since high handedness is an abiding trait of American diplomacy, the powerful mediator's influence is likely to be limited. The hope lies in quite old-fashioned diplomacy with an international personality of eminence, belong to no Government and acceptable to both, simply helping the two sides to start the talks and intervening only when asked to. It will help if visitors to Beijing and Dharamsala try out on their hosts various formulae for Tibet's autonomy as part of China. The diplomatic record from 1978 to this day encourages as well as warns. On December 3, 1978 the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping made three points in his meeting with Mr. Gyalo Thundup "Tibet is a part of China", the Dalai Lama was free to send delegations to Tibet to investigate the actual conditions there; and 50 Tibetan teachers from India would be permitted to teach in various parts of Tibet (In acceptance of a Tibetan suggestion).

According to the brilliant Tibetan refugee scholar, Dr Dawa Norbu, "while the Dalai Lama started sending a series of fact-finding delegations" to both Inner and Outer Tibet, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, which took charge of the Tibetan affairs now, indicated the nature of Chinese concessions to the Dalai Lama" in a restrictive sense China would define the issues.

On March 12, 1979 Deng met the Dalai Lama's representatives in Beijing and said "The Dalai Lama is welcome to come back. He can go out again after his return". On July 28, 1981 Hu Yoabang conveyed to Mr Thundup China's five-point proposal for transmission to the Dalai Lama: China's new approach to nationalities; China would grant amnesty to the rebels of 1959; return of the Dalai Lama, his privileges, political and economic, guaranteed to be the same as those before 1959; and the Dalai Lama to enjoy freedom of expres-

sion and be appointed Vice-President of the National People's Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC).

The Dalai Lama rejected the offer as an attempt "to reduce the question of Tibet to a discussion of my own personal status". True enough, but he might have made a counter-proposal to build on China's offer. There followed a series of public statements by him abroad, evidently made on advice from advisers not difficult to identify. They helped him little. A five-point plan envisaging" negotiations on the future status of Tibet" was put forth, incredibly at the congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington, D.C., on December 21, 1987.

This non-starter was followed by another at Strasbourg on June 15, 1988. The Dalai Lama proposed Tibet's "association" with China which would be "responsible for Tibet's(sic) foreign policy". He proposed talks:"A negotiating team...has been selected". On September 23, 1988 the Chinese Embassy conveyed a "message to the representative of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi" which was published later. It recalled that contacts between the two sides "have not been interrupted since 1979" and offered "direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama" anytime, at any place subject to three conditions "no foreigners should be involved"; " the Kashag Government" in Dharamsala will not be an interlocutor; the Strasbourg proposal was unacceptable as implying Tibet's independence.

### **None other**

On October 25, 1988 the Dalai Lama's representative in Delhi, Mr. Tashi Wangdi, replied suggesting talks in January 1989, at Geneva. But why did the Tibetans have to include "a foreigner" as "legal adviser" to the delegation ? He was none other than Mr. Michael C. Van Walt Van Praag, author of "The Status of Tibet". Besides Beijing complained that the delegation was composed of "principal members of the Government-In-Exile". On both counts China's objection was justified. Sympathy for Tibet's cause should not be cloud

judgement. Also, the proposal was made public before it reached Beijing. A good opportunity was lost. On March 8, 1989, China imposed martial law in Tibet and (repression propose..) on April 19, 1989, talks in Hongkong to "resolve the procedural issues". Once again it was instantly made public.

Map the distance between the rival positions and the tragedy becomes apparent. "I am not demanding independence for Tibet" the Dalai Lama told Newsweek on March 20, 1989. "any issue is open for discussion except the question of Tibetan Independence" Beijing said on March 6, 1989. Prime Minister Li Peng said in New Delhi on December 13, 1991: "Except independence, which is not negotiable, all other issues are open to negotiations" Prime Minister P.V. Narashima Rao rightly pointed out on December 20, 1991, that "It is not a commonplace statement when he makes it on Indian soil".

Last year a new note was injected, namely, revival of the invitation of the Dalai Lama to return. But it is not clear whether the return would follow a negotiated accord or precede it. Mr. Ziang Zeming, Vice Chairman, Foreign Affairs committee of the CPPCC, suggested the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet in New Delhi on February 12. On August 25, a Foreign Ministry spokesman repeated the invitation. So did Mr. Li Rui Huan, Chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC. The invitation was, obviously, a calculated move.

Meanwhile, at a meeting with journalists in New Delhi on August 11, 1993, the Dalai Lama disclosed that his brother had been in Beijing a fortnight before and was told, amidst accusations, that China wanted to keep the dialogue alive. The Dalai Lama pithily summoned up his stand on October 3 in Calcutta-an accord for "self-rule within China" and "not separation from the country". What he needs is guarantees for his people's rights and for Tibet's genuine autonomy.

On the substance, China is in the wrong. But on the style of approach to a settlement, His Holiness has been ill-advised on more than one occasion. He has a valid grievance. Recent China state-

ments, he said on March 11, 1994, pertain only "to my personal return to Tibet". But, there is whole set of China's offers, not least its Prime Minister's on December 13, 1991, in New Delhi, to discuss anything except Tibet's independence.

The gulf is not unbridgeable, Tibet's plight will not be improved by rhetoric alone. Undoubtedly, China's disgraceful record on human rights in Tibet must be exposed thoroughly. Tibet's cause must not be ignored. But along with advocacy of respect for human rights, some thought should be given in earnest to the vital task of negotiations between the Dalai Lama on the lines of China's offer of December 1988. It is not a perfect solution. But as Dr. B. Ambedkar said in his famous lecture "Rahenade Gandhi aur Jinnah" in 1943, "You must not refuse what is offered when you know that your sanctions are inadequate to compel your opponent to concede more".

*Statesman (New Delhi) April 14, 1994*

## A proposal on Tibet: Challenge to India and China

Sunanda K.Datta-Ray

It has rightly been claimed that the speech by the Dalai Lama made last week in Strasbourg represented an important initiative. But, contrary to most published analyses, the shift is of emphasis rather than substance. Above all, the address to the European Parliament was a triumph of strategy, for neither of the two most closely involved powers- China and to some extend India - can refuse to respond positively without inviting suspicion about its good faith.

But the offer of talks is not new for, apart from the fact that several Tibetan delegations visited Beijing before the Chinese called an abrupt halt to the process, the last clause in the five point plan calling for Tibet to "be transformed into a zone of "ahimsa" that the pontiff announced in the USA last September, pleaded for "negotiations on the future status of Tibet and the relationship between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples".

The five-point proposal that he disclosed at Strasbourg really only fleshed out the earlier offer with detailed suggestions to "serve as a basis for resolving the issue of Tibet". What may seem new is that without surrendering any point of principle ("at no time, since the founding of our nation in 127 B.C., have we Tibetans conceded our sovereignty to a foreign power" he told Euro MPs), the Dalai Lama is willing not only to abdicate his own secular authority but also to accept something like the status of a protectorate for Tibet. But he has never set much store for his personal position, and one of the

reasons why previous negotiations foundered was that the Chinese tried to shift the debate from Tibet's future to the role of the Dalai Lama. Also two months ago in London he advocated a compromise arguing that since "China as a Government will never give up Tibet ..... I feel there is nothing wrong in trying to negotiate some middle way."

## Position

But his recognition of "China's own interest" in Tibet suggests the pontiff might be prepared to admit that Beijing's position may not be altogether outside the law. So does acceptance of China's "right to maintain a restricted number of military installations" in Tibet albeit "solely for defence purposes" and only until a peace conference can lead to demilitarization and neutralization.

The impression of a sound offer confidently made is reinforced by the business like tone of the Dalai Lama's announcement that a negotiating team had already been selected to present the proposal to Beijing. He has wisely spoken as a "realistic" solution, presumably meaning that Tibetan expectations will be trimmed to Chinese requirements, clarified that there can be no decision without a "nationwide referendum" and acknowledged the recent changes in China which have brought about a new leadership more pragmatic and liberal"

It may not be too far-fetched to suggest that while he has always abhorred violence, and continues to do so, the Dalai Lama has also concluded from the October disturbances followed by the March rioting (when "racial tension seemed to be at an all-time peak", according to the British team led by Lord Ennals) that Tibetans, clergy and laity after reunion reconciled to their plight. The resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, both U.S. Houses and the West German, Dutch and Swedish legislatures may be of only academic value but must also be regarded as an encouraging factor. Nor can the effects of the Hong Kong agreement and the nine-point

offer to Taiwan, both products of Deng Xiaoping's "one country two systems" principle, be overlooked. That the man with few illusions about realpolitik, and determined to obtain the best possible terms for Tibet, the Dalai Lama expects Beijing to take serious note of the "spirit of conciliation" in which his package which really spells out the irreducible minimum, is offered.

That the main proposal for Tibet to "became a self-governing democratic political entity..in association with the People's Republic of China" would mean a kind of protectorate is confirmed by the second clause that Beijing "could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy" though the Tibetans themselves should be entitled to develop and maintain external science, sports and other non-political activities. A Government consisting of a popularly elected chief executive, a bicameral legislature and a constitution or basic law" with "the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetans".

## **Religion**

An emphasis on individual freedom, especially the right to religion ("the source of Tibet's national identity") reflects concern over the social and economic policies that have been imposed on the country since 1949, as does the insistence that Beijing "abandon its policy of transferring Chinese to Tibet". The combined effect has been to devastate Tibetan life and institutions to the point of extinction. Similarly, the demand that the manufacture, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments must be prohibited as well as the use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste is a well-founded expressions of dismay not only over reports that a quarter of China's nuclear missile force is located in Tibet but also allegedly being made to dump Japanese and West German nuclear waste in northern Tibet. The hope is that a regional peace conference will "ensure that Tibet becomes a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarization".

The Dalai Lama admits that "many Tibetans will be disappointed by the moderate stand" he has taken, he rightly foresees intense debate among Tibetans, at home and in exile. What he does not say in so many words, though it is implicit all through the six pages of his speech, is that the proposals present a challenge to the spirit of relaxation that is abroad in China and which explains the decision to use Tibetan, instead of Chinese as the primary language of Government offices in Tibet from July 1. A China that is liberalizing its internal processes and rationalizing its relations with the rest of the world cannot afford to spurn such a handsome overture without losing credibility.

China apart, the country's most closely involved in Tibet's destiny is the country that had given the Buddhist pontiff refuge. If New Delhi's pronouncements on the subject sounds gracious at times is not because hospitality is grudged so much as because of a dread of Beijing taking umbrage at what our distinguished guest might be up to. This quite irrational nervousness, reflects little credit on the Government's self confidence, ability to assess situations and understanding of Chinese reflexes. It also explains the duplicity of such undignified gestures of placation as last October's public statement deplored the Dalai Lama's activities, when in fact, no expression of India's displeasure was conveyed to him or his entourage.

It bears repeating that this kind of appeasement cuts no ice and has gained India nothing. Beijing sees no reason to be as meanly mouthed in its dealings with New Delhi, witness the blast of its wrath when Sikkim was absorbed or statehood bestowed on Arunachal Pradesh. Instead of inviting immediate and terrible retaliation, an honest exposition of this country's concern for Tibet's lost autonomy- not just as a matter of history or morality but because it has a direct bearing on our security-might ever win some respect. It would certainly convey the message that India has certain legitimate interests in the region and is not prepared to forget them.

Let it not be forgotten at a time when there is renewed talk of high powered exchanges and a border settlement that Tibet's status di-

rectly touches New Delhi's own case on the territorial dispute. The Dalai Lama cogently illustrated this interdependence when he told the Indian Council of World affairs in 1959, " the Government of India contends that the boundary between Tibet and India has been finally settled according to the McMahon Line, but this boundary was laid down by the Simla Convention, and this Convention was valid and binding only as between Tibet and the British Government. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that if you deny sovereign status of Tibet. You deny the validity of the Simla Convention, and therefore, you deny the validity of the McMahon Line".

### **Autonomous**

The External Affairs ministry's official spokesman did just that last October when he said, "we regard Tibet as an autonomous region of China and do not comment on the internal affairs of China". For if Tibet was not sovereign, its participation in the Simla Convention was irregular, the agreement it produced was invalid and the McMahon Line is as untenable as the Chinese say it is. The uncomfortable truth is that India cannot defend the boundary it claims except by supporting Tibet's independence. Since this might be perilous diplomacy, New Delhi should be grateful to the Dalai Lama for himself indicating a way out of the dilemma by proposing that, though historically sovereign, Tibet's is now prepared to adjust to conditions on the ground and accept the position of a protectorate of China's. Endorsement of this formula would enable India to stand by the legitimacy of the McMahon Line and at the same time reduce the risk of giving offence to the Chinese without betraying the Tibetans. The mandarins of South Block might also derive consolation from the reduction that while Britain's protectorates graduate to full sovereignty, the genre is given short in this part of the world.

## **China's policy on Tibet**

**Anees Jung**

## **Where oppression reigns**

A million Tibetans are estimated to have lost their lives since the annexation of their country by the Chinese. And they have increasingly become a minority in their own country as China sends large numbers of migrants who rule and enjoy the privileged life.

"It was like seeing a year in a day: bullets whizzed by, monks were beaten with rifles, men and women watched their most respected leaders being humiliated. And at the cost of their own lives the people rushed into a blazing police station to save them. Thirty years of fear and frustration had finally found a release. To see their bravery and to watch them stand against such great odds and die for freedom was a very powerful experience for me".

This is a statement made by Asupi, a pen name assumed by a young American photographer who was in Lhasa during the last anti-Chinese demonstration. He had gone to Tibet looking for that mythical kingdom which he had read about as a schoolboy in National Geographic magazine. Instead of a Shangri-la at the roof of the world he found a place darkened by fear and oppression. The architecture had turned as stark as the bare mountains. The legendary Potala Palace that housed a museum of Tibetan history and culture was locked. Most of the monasteries were destroyed or in semi-ruins. (an estimated 6,000)

And a people known for their gentle ways and relaxed manner had accepted fear as a state of mind. Overrun by the Chinese they had

withdrawn into the old part of the city that survived as if in medieval times without sewage, without running water and without the opportunity to light and freedom.

In this once forbidden city which for centuries had prized its solitude and isolation, the natives have become a minority. According to official estimates there are 7.5 million Chinese settlers amidst a Tibetan population of six million. As China transfers large numbers of migrants who rule and enjoy the privilege life, the Tibetans watch their land being turned into a relic of a past which they still cling to in pride and desperation.

"One member in almost every family I met had died or gone to prison," says Asupi who spent a few months in Tibet visiting people and places outside Lhasa. One old man who had spent three years in a small black room and had been burnt each day with an iron rod said to him: "After that they sent me to work, hard work. Everyday they gave me less than a cup full of tsampa (ground barley) and a glass of tea like water. I was just waiting for them to kill me. I had no more ideas".

And woman who had lost a son and a father trembled as she said: "It is nothing for them to kill. They are not taught by their parents not to kill." A million of these peace-loving people, who grew up learning that everything in life is as precious as, are estimated to have lost their lives since the Chinese annexation. Asupi, who compares it to the holocaust in Germany, was himself beaten, arrested and his film rolls confiscated. A few that he managed to send out of the country reveal pictures of a people caught in an unwilling turmoil; red-robed monks waving home made Tibetan flags, chanting slogans. A demonstration that is reported to have started off as a non-violent expression of a long suffering people was provoked into violence by the Chinese police. It is said that a monk who snatched a rifle from a policemen instead of shooting back with it, broke it and threw it in a fire.

According to Asupi, the demonstration was a conscious decision.

The opening up of the country to tourism and the presence of foreigners gave the people a certain relief and a hope that their voice would be heard in the rest of the world. "Little do they know what a violent place the world is-a place where no one wants to listen to peace," says Asupi, who saw violence in a physical form for the first time. "I had seen only TV violence. Real violence is far more sporadic and brutal. People have wondered at one of my pictures that shows a monk throwing a stone. The monks after all are real people"

In this same world that has watched silently the cultural genocide of a proud and peaceful race, lives the Dalai Lama who refuses to hate his enemy. Says he "we cannot hate the Chinese because it was their own ignorance that motivated them to harm us. A true practitioner of religion considers his enemy to be his greater friend because only he can help him develop patience and compassion". Listening to Asupi and reading the lucid memories of the Dalai Lama makes me painfully aware of my own ignorance and apathy towards a people who have been among us since 1959.

To resist and defy the enemy does not come naturally to them. Writes the Dalai Lama: I grew up with hardly any knowledge of world affairs and it was in that state, when I was 16, that I was called to lead my country against the invasion of communist China. Today the same man talks about a world increasingly interdependent where the strong and the weak who share a planet have to contribute in their own way. His five-point peace plan is not the voice of a young man who grew up almost as a divine prisoner in Potala. It has the echoes of a world leader, whose voice unlike many others is one of compassion and peace. In a century which Richard Bach visualizes as peopled by dragons who wear government costumes, failure suits and disaster outfits, where society's demons screech and princesses and knights hide from each other, even themselves, there still lives a Dalai Lama, a knight of peace, right among us. How many of us have bothered to hear his voice, that remains hemmed in by the hills of Dharamsala, as distant to many of us as ?

Tibet itself ?

### **Tibet's unending agony**

Tibet is on the boil once again, and this time the Tibetan people's protests for freedom from Chinese rule, manifest in the form of a protest march and attacks on Chinese military convoys in Lhasa on March 6, have been more organized and orchestrated than ever before. The protests are also significant because for the first time in recent history, the people are protesting for the second time in a year.

The last major protest, which provoked a massive crackdown by the Chinese police and militia, occurred in September and October last. Interestingly, the protests this time have been catalyzed by the official Chinese policy of liberalization in respect of Tibet. After September's protests, the Chinese authorities decided to adopt a "Leftist excesses" which continued thereafter. They decided to permit the Tibetans to celebrate the week-long Great Prayer Festival with traditional pomp for the first time since they annexed the territory in 1950. From all indications, they were serious about allowing Tibet an unprecedented degree of freedom in religious matters, because they even went so far as to publicize the prayer festival on state-owned television and the print media, though the calculation that such concessions would help to neutralize nationalist sentiment in the occupied territory could not have been altogether remote. Unfortunately, as in Russia, liberalization has had just the opposite effect in Tibet as well : it has spurred India, Tibet, and China.

The latest views of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on India and China, from the standpoint of Tibet, have been appearing in the press. If China, held control over Tibet in just the twin spheres of foreign affairs and defence, and left Tibet free and its own master in everything else, His Holiness would regard this as good as "Independence" and would rest content. So it seems from the press reports. India and China, two of the highest nations of the world, cannot ignore each other, being geographically so near each other and hold-

ing, as they do, such key international positions. Primarily with possible threats from the then Russia and China in view, the British imperial policy was steadily aimed at fostering the buffer status of Tibet.

With China controlling the foreign policy and defence of a consenting Tibet, India would get indirectly by vitally concerned in most matters with China, even if otherwise directly only with Tibet as its next door neighbor. Therefore there has to be a tripartite treaty, India being the third partner. India's intentions towards China would of course even then remain the friendliest, just as would be the case vis-a-vis Tibet also; but it is a game which takes two to play.

The last Indo-China conference was held in Simla, in Himachal Pradesh. The Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, which adjoins Tibet, had age-old trade relations with Tibet and Raja Kehar Singh of the erstwhile Bosher state which included the present Kinnaur district. This commercial connection was cut asunder over 40 years ago by the Chinese occupation of Tibet. But the tie is reported to have recently been revived by an agreement between India and China. Uttar Pradesh sails in the same boat as far as border trade is concerned, though it lacks the social and religious interests that bind the border villages of Himachal Pradesh and Tibet. Thus important border areas of India share vital interests with Tibet.

Whatever the political nature of the claims of China over Tibet, be it suzerainty or sovereignty, or imperial domination, whatever the strength or weakness of these claims and whether the boundary agreements featured Shipki-la or Nathu-la or the whole Indo-Tibetan border in between, or it was the McMohan Line, the facts remain that, at the Simla conference, China participated and so did Tibet, each in its own right and for itself and not the representative of the other.

Whatever the niceties of interpretation as to whether, as an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China, Tibet becomes or does not become a "part of China", the hard reality is that Tibet for

India would be less than a buffer nation, while China decides, and Tibet consents to, policy or measure relating to the foreign affairs and defence of Tibet.

Even with the warmest and deepest of mutual friendship, India and Tibet will not be one country and Tibet's relation with India will continue to fall into the category of foreign affairs and the two countries bound everlasting to be geographical neighbors would have innumerable points of mutual contacts. Dealing with China as the adjacent political entity, or with Tibet directly and the next-door nation, would be one thing but negotiating matters with that huge country in charge of the foreign affairs and defence, on behalf of itself plus Tibet, or treating matters with Tibet via China, will neither be so simple proposition. Having made sure of its own reasonable, just and fair interests, it would behove India to throw all its weight of good offices and international support in favor of what His Holiness demands. However no time should be lost in at least informal exchanges of views with His Holiness, the solid outcome of which should be pressed by both India and Tibet when the occasion arrives for negotiations with China, before that country is willingly entrusted by Tibet with its foreign affairs and defence matters.

The broad, basic and overall policy aspects should be distinguished from as many secondary matters of detail as China might be persuaded to leave to allow for direct and independent dealing between India and Tibet. China should figure nowhere in this area. Internal pressures, no less than the external ones, e.g. world opinion, seem to be telling upon China's thinking. His Holiness has gone on record at a recent press conference that he perceives a change in the attitude of China. May be new vistas will open up. We in India should take that futuristic vision in time.

*(The writer is Speaker of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha)*

*Indian Post (Bombay) March 9, 1988*

## **The Tibet factor in Sino-Indian relations**

**S.P Seth**

Apart from the border question Tibet too continues to figure in Sino-Indian talks at the highest levels, as evidenced during President R. Venkataraman's China visit. Premier Li Peng reportedly told the Indian President that the Dalai Lama's activities in India and abroad were a matter of concern to China. President Venkataraman assured the Chinese leader that India continued to regard Tibet as an autonomous region of China and that his country would not support any political activity against China.

It might be recalled that only a few days before Li Peng's India visit last December, the Chinese ambassador had told a press conference in New Delhi that Tibet was an "important problem" between India and China. He also alleged that India continued to permit anti-Chinese activities on its soil, thus violating Rajiv Gandhi's commitment against this during his December 1988 China visit. At China's instance, a special paragraph on Tibet was, therefore, included in the joint communique at the end of Li Peng's visit. The relevant para read : "The Chinese side expressed concern about the continued activities in India by some Tibetans against their motherland and reiterated that Tibet was an inalienable part of Chinese territory and that it was firmly opposed to any attempt and action aimed at splitting China and bringing about "independence of Tibet". The Indian side reiterated its long standing and consistent position that Tibet is an autonomous region of China and that it does not allow

Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India".

Tibet is an intractable problem between China and the Tibetan people. Indeed, Beijing realized this in late 1978 when China's strongman, Deng Xiaoping, initiated a dialogue with the Dalai Lama's emissary and elder brother, Gyalo Thondup. He had, however, made it clear that independence for Tibet was part of question. Deng invited Dalai Lama to send delegations to Tibet to investigate the actual conditions there. The Dalai Lama had earlier modified his position on Tibetan independence. He declared on March 10, 1978: "If the six million Tibetans are really happy and prosperous as never before, there is no reason for us to argue otherwise". Later, in 1980, he said that "the core of the Tibetan issue is the welfare and ultimate happiness of the six million Tibetans in Tibet".

However, as matters proceeded, Beijing sought to define the limited parameters of any talks between the two sides. The Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang, made it amply clear that China's interest was confined to a measure of economic decentralization, easing of working and living conditions of Tibetans, revival and development of Tibetan culture and education and increased Tibetan participation in the local administration. To make such an agenda personally palatable to the Dalai Lama, Hu had it convey to him (as paraphrased by Dawa Norbu): "If and when he (Dalai Lama) returns to China...His political and economic privileges will be those of pre-1959 (before the popular uprising in Tibet).

He will be appointed as vice-president of the National People's Congress as well as vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee. He emphasized that neither the Dalai Lama nor his entourage need worry about their living conditions or employment as China would guarantee their privileges. The Tibetan spiritual leader was amused. He said: "Instead of addressing the real issues facing the six million Tibetan people, China has attempted to reduce the question of Tibet to a discussion of my personal status". But still the dialogue continued, including the despatch of Dalai

Lama's fact-finding missions into Tibet between 1979 to 1985. The missions found Tibetans to be far from happy. There was widespread discontent with the Chinese rule. The Dalai Lama was still living legend with them and a symbol of resistance and hope to his people.

As things were getting nowhere, Beijing stopped receiving any more fact-finding missions making an issue of their travel documents. The Dalai Lama's position hardened too, as evidenced in his five point proposal put forward before the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus on September 21, 1987. The most important of these proposals was a plea for the transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace. If this looked like a declaration of independence and neutrality, the Dalai Lama softened it considerably in the course of an address to the European Parliament at Strasbourg in 1988. In this, he was prepared to concede China's control over Tibet's foreign and defence affairs in conjunction with complete domestic autonomy. He said that "the whole of Tibet (inner and outer) should become a self-governing political entity founded on law by agreement with the people.... in association with the people's Republic of China." This was, however, not acceptable to China" because it has not at all relinquished the concept of "the independence of Tibet".

As China imposed martial law in Lhasa on March 7, 1989 (due to popular unrest there), all contacts between Beijing and the Dalai Lama's camp broke off. Which now needs to be revived. The Dalai Lama's Strasbourg proposals are good starting point. Any settlement of the Tibetan problem will need to be based on a substantial degree of real autonomy for Tibet.

Li Peng has reportedly told the Indian President that China was willing to discuss anything except independence for Tibet. The Tibetan leadership should explore this further. They seem to be hoping that China would soon collapse like the Soviet Union, and they will have their independence. To this end, they have formulated plans for a provisional government of an independent Tibet. This is naive and dangerous thinking because no two situations are exactly simi-

lar. But it is for the Chinese and Tibetan leadership to work out their problems. India is not in the picture and Beijing should leave New Delhi alone in its matter.

*Pioneer (Lucknow) May 28, 1992*

## **Sino-Indian border: Gandhi's gift to China**

**K.R. Sunder Rajan**

Despite the lavish coverage it received in the Indian press, Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China has achieved precious little. Even the time-frame within which the border dispute is to be "resolved" is yet to be decided. Whether the joint working group will be able to fix a time-frame at all is doubtful.

Perhaps, the best one can hope for is that the border dispute will remain frozen while the joint working group goes on meeting periodically. Of course, it will be a gain if there are no border clashes and peace prevails. The truth is that the Chinese will not give up Aksai Chin under any circumstances and India cannot write it off. The McMohan line will also remain a bone of contention.

The very concept of fixing a time-frame to resolve the border dispute between the two countries seem highly unrealistic when neither side has been willing to make concessions. India's predicament is far more difficult. Unlike the Chinese side, no government in Delhi can politically afford to make any major concessions. The Chinese might accept the Indian position on the McMohan Line if we agree to give up Aksai Chin. But this will cause a political explosion irrespective of which party happens to be in power in Delhi. The India-China border dispute is somewhat like the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir. Neither side is prepared to make any concession. Benazir Bhutto has made it amply clear that the "Kashmir

question" is of vital importance to the country. Here too, the best one can hope for is peace along the border while high-level committees go on meeting from time to time.

In a sense, China has gained from Rajiv Gandhi's visit. Beijing has been assured that India continues to regard Tibet as an "autonomous" part of China and that what happens there is China's internal affair. Considering that a lot of things are happening in Tibet, this can, in fact be regarded as a major concession from the Indian side to China. It is not much of a consolation to the Tibetans that they have been assured by the Indian government that this does not mean that Tibetan refugees here including Dalai Lama will be asked to leave. However, they can expect stricter vigil on their activities.

Benazir Bhutto will never concede that what happens in Kashmir is India's internal affair. The Pakistanis know that their claim to Kashmir will remain on paper. Yet, they will go on asserting their position on the subject. No one in his senses will say that India should liberate Tibet by going to war with China. But the tragedy is that the government of India has not even tried to bring about a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Beijing. Nor has it expressed its sympathy for the sufferings of the Tibetan people under Chinese rule. There have been several bloody uprisings in Lhasa in recent months which have been put ruthlessly. Since the Chinese grabbed Tibet, nearly half million people have been forced marriages between Tibetans into a minority in their own land. Tibet has also been turned into a huge dumping ground for nuclear waste. What exactly does our government mean when it says that Tibet is an "autonomous" part of China? Genuine autonomy means some degree of freedom for Tibetans to manage their internal affairs. Some of our so-called leftist intellectuals argue that the Chinese presence in Tibet is a "reality" which must be accepted. But in the case of Tibet our government has gone beyond acceptance of this reality. It has virtually told the Chinese that we are not bothered in the least by what they do to the Tibetan people. Why then did we send our army to Maldives? The real story of our intervention in Maldives is yet to be

known. But one thing is clear. There was an internal attempt to overthrow the dictatorial regime. Maybe, the rebels managed to get the support of some mercenaries. Even if the claim regarding foreign mercenaries is true, that was the internal business of the Maldivians.

If the government of India really feels that it has a sacred obligation to go to the rescue of oppressed neighboring nations, it should have done something to help the Burmese, thousands of whom have been recently slaughtered by the military regime. Like the Tibetans, the people of Burma are culturally very close to us.

Other nations have also adopted a cynical attitude towards Tibet. Many "freedom-loving" western governments have told the Dalai Lama not to make "controversial" statements during his visits. The Americans trained Tibetan Khampas to wage a guerrilla war against the Chinese. But once relations between Washington and Beijing started improving, the Tibetans were told by the Americans that they were no longer of any use.

The Russians too made sympathetic gestures towards the Tibetans during their conflict with the Chinese. As in the case of the Americans, Moscow discarded the poor Tibetans once it got friendly signals from Beijing. It appears from the statements made by the Dalai Lama, on behalf, that his attitude towards the Chinese military presence in Tibet. The demilitarization of Tibet will also greatly reduce any military threat to India from China. India can respond by a matching withdrawal of its forces confronting the Chinese. But by telling the Chinese that what they did in Tibet is their internal business, the government of India has finally demolished the hopes of the Tibetan people that some way would be founded to ease their sufferings.

The most astonishing thing is that none among the huge contingent of Indian reporters who accompanied Rajiv Gandhi to Beijing showed any interest in the happenings in Tibet. Surely, they could have made some effort to gather authentic information about the unrest in Ti-

bet. Among other things, they could have talked to resident foreign correspondents in Beijing and to diplomats of other countries posted in the Chinese capital. It was not the function of our reporters to limit themselves to the India-China summit talks and that too only to official briefings. Ofcourse, trying to probe the Tibetan iron curtain would have meant inviting the displeasure of both Indian and Chinese officialdom. But then newsmen are something more than just stenographers or sight seers or errands boys of the ministry of External Affairs.

Rajiv Gandhi has handed over Tibet to China as India's New year gift. The Chinese need not to be in a hurry to settle the border dispute; it can wait.

### **Dealing with China**

There is no doubt that the old Hindi-Chini bhai relationship is dead. It was, in any case, based on an unrealistic assumption which assumed that anti-imperialism was sufficient to overcome the real conflicts between two countries with different social and political ideologies and with both harboring ambitions to play a leading role in the region.

Even if friendly relations are established between India and China, we shouldn't have any illusions about the restoration of a peaceful frontier between the two countries. The Indo-Tibetan frontier will continue to be a live issue and the best guarantee of friendly relations can only be a strong defensive posture. In any event, there is a need to guard against entertaining false hopes for Beijing will not, at least in the near future, abandon its friendly relations with Islamabad to gain India's goodwill. What will continue for is that in the course of time it will succeed in persuading Beijing to distance itself from Pakistan. That, to a certain extent, will depend on how the situation in central Asia, which has a considerable Muslim population in areas bordering that region, may find its interests at variance from that of Pakistan. That should provide India with an op-

portunity to fill the breach. In any case, it was an incredible piece of folly for India to have established an adversarial relationship with two of its most powerful neighbors, a case of political and diplomatic ineptitude which is unique. If Pakistan was the major enemy, an attempt should have been made to isolate it. And, for that, friendship with China was necessary.

It is true that New Delhi had recognized Tibet as a crucial factor for Sino-Indian relations for the border between the two countries constitutes the frontier. This border had never been properly demarcated as long as the British ruled over India. This was to New Delhi's advantage, particularly since at that time China was an extremely weak power and was in no position to assert its rights in Tibet. In fact, every Chinese government, under British pressure, was prepared to concede Tibet a measure of autonomy. It was, therefore, not surprising that as early as '54, India recognized Tibet as an integral part of China. However, Tibet subsequently became a domestic issue in Indian politics. After India became independent, while the ICS officials manning the foreign office abandoned the British Raj's policy in other regions, they claimed Indian rights in Tibet. For rightwing politicians, Tibet became a stick to belabor the left with. The West, of course, exploited the Tibetan issue for its own purpose and this, in turn, led the Chinese to believe that India was colluding with the imperialist powers.

Relations between the two countries had already soured in the aftermath of India's recognition of Tibet in '54 and the Tibetan rebellion of '58. And the flight of Dalai Lama to India in '59 made the situation worse. The Dalai Lama and his followers were not only given refugee in India; a "little Tibet" centered around Dharamsala came into being. The Tibetan lobby became active and as late as '91, especially during the Chinese prime minister's visit to New Delhi, it attempted to organize demonstrations which were prevented by the Indian government. Eventually, the result of the increasing mutual suspicion led to the border war in December 1962. After that, Sino-Indian relations remained frozen till the end of the

cold war. Though some discussions subsequently took place and small steps were taken to break the ice, nothing worthwhile emerged. At the same time, the breakdown in relations fuelled an insurgency in India's north-eastern states which, along with Pakistan, became a permanent thorn in this country's flesh. It is only recently that China has ended its assistance to the insurgency in the north-east. On the other hand, there was very little India could do to harm China. It was in India's interest to take steps to convince China that it genuinely desired an improvement in relation. That could be done only by shifting our position on Tibet issue. With Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's visit to China last month this has now become possible.

The Dalai Lama, it is reported, has acknowledged that independence is a luxury Tibet cannot afford and that he is willing to go back on his original demand. However, an entire government-in-exile, had come into being in Dharamsala and five senior lamas are said to be extremely powerful and influential in this setup. What is more, while the older generation may be willing to go back to Tibet with the Dalai Lama, the younger generation may prefer to stay back. If some of the senior lamas also do that, India will face a problem. Unless India takes steps to do away with the Tibetan power structure in Dharamsala, the Chinese will continue to be suspicious of this country's intentions. The senior lamas will have to be told that if they are unwilling to go back, they cannot remain in India. The bulk of Tibetan community, if they decided against returning, will have to be moved away from the Himalayan region. This is India's domestic problem. But since the exiles can affect diplomatic relations between India and China, it will be a mistake to ignore the ground reality. In the event, New Delhi has to get rid of its Tibetan incubus.

*Independent October 5, 1993*

## Tibet angle in China talks

Bhabani Sen Gupta

Belying the hopes raised that the Sino-Indian talks would be elevated to the political level, an official announcement on Oct 4, made it clear that the talks to be resumed on Nov. 13 would be confined to the officials track. It is not clear at this stage if the next round would relate to the border alone or an attempt will be made to work out norms of normalization of relations as the border negotiations continue.

We have been getting faint signals, however, that the rusted wheels of India-China relations have begun to roll out of the narrow gauge of the border dispute. Though mostly at sub-political level, the two government have started comparing notes on larger global issue, and looking minutely for ways and means to expand trade, promote economic, technological and cultural relations, and build up bridges of mutual understanding even if the border does not bend to an early accord.

### New dimension

The October riots in Lhasa and some other cities in Tibet in which number of Tibetans and a few Hans were killed or wounded- lend a new dimension to the coming round of Sino-Indian talks. India's border is with the Tibetan region of China, not with China proper. Indeed, China's two extra-mural central Asian regions- Xinzaiang and Tibet- bring the Middle Kingdom into South Asia. In the last ten years or so, the Chinese leaders have been anxious to repair the

damage done to Tibetan cultural properties have been repaired, thousands of religious and cultural properties have been returned to individual or collective owners, scores of Tibetans have been released from detention, and considerable volumes of funds investment in Tibet's economic and infrastructure development.

The Chinese apparently believed that they had been able to stabilize the political emotional situation in Tibet. They opened the region to tourist traffic; scores of American and European tourists were allowed to travel to the roof of the world. The Chinese even conducted Jimmy Carter and his wife and the west German chancellor, Helmut Kohl through two much publicized tours of Tibet. The opening up policy of the Dengist reformers allowed the Tibet under transition.

Tibetan nationalism, however, will not be easily absorbed in the much larger mainstream of Chinese nationhood. As we have been witnessing in India, cultural and linguistic pluralism of multinational political systems tend to get assertive with the process of development. India and China have been pursuing two very different models of nation-building and development. But model's accommodative and assimilative potentials are being tested. China's troubles are more with the extramural regions than with the mainly which is fortunately inhabited by a single nationality, the Hun. India has been more successful in the extramural region like Nagaland and Mizoram than in its multinational mainland.

Since Tibet is internationally recognized as a region of the Chinese People's Republic, any political unrest in Tibet becomes China's internal affairs, however, in addition to the two million Tibetans living in Tibet, there is a relatively small but not entirely unassertive Tibetan diaspora of probably 200,000. Eighty thousand of the diaspora live in India; several thousands of them came to this country in 1959 with the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal head of the Tibetan diaspora, and enjoys considerable political and spiritual following in Tibet also. Large tracts in India's north and north-eastern regions, along the foothills of the Hima-

layas, are inhabited by peoples with still strong cultural and linguistic ties with Tibetans.

### **India's recognition**

The concept of Tibet's "independence" came alive when the Chinese revolutionary regime brought the vast region under its control. After an initial period of limited ambivalence, India recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, while Beijing accepted the Dalai Lama's traditional temporal -spiritual role. Integration of Tibet in the Marxist-Leninist People's Republic of China, however, inevitably led to a major rebellion of the ruling elements. The rebellion of the Khampas made the Dalai flee Tibet with large entourage, soured relations between India and China, pushed the disputed border to the forefront of the relationship, led to a series of gradually escalating border incidents, and finally, to the border war of 1962.

After a lapse of nearly three decades, the concept of Tibetan "independence" is once again gaining global publicity. The Dalai Lama himself has embarked on a carefully timed political campaign. In recent years particularly since the death of Indira Gandhi, the Dalai Lama has not been scrupulously observing the undertaking he had given to the Indian Government in 1959 while enjoying asylum in India, he would refrain from political activity.

He seems to be under pressure from the Tibetan diaspora, including the post-1959 generation of youthful Tibetans living in India and other countries, to revive the "struggle" for Tibet's independence. His current visit to the United States is for all purposes a political mission. When the Dalai Lama and his followers talk about suppression of human rights in Tibet by the Chinese, they actually demand Tibet's autonomy outside China or with a nominal linkage with China.

### **Sino-Soviet ties**

The US government remains committed to the best possible rela-

tions with China for very viable strategic, political and economic reasons. However, the dramatic improvement in Sino-Soviet relation, culminating in the recent concluded agreement demarcation and delineation of the largest international border, has cautioned many Americans about the durability of the close relations the US has enjoyed with China since 1972. For an influential segment of Americans, friendship with China, a communist power, has no meaning if China ceases to be anti-Soviet.

What alarmed these Americans is a phrase in the joint-communiqué on the Sino-Soviet border agreement declaring that it had "deepened mutual understanding" between China and the USSR. If "deepened mutual understanding" between the world's two giant communist powers leads to normal, tension-free, friendly co-operation, it means a qualitative change in the triangular US China-Soviet relationship. The scales turn in favor of Moscow, or, in the least, they do not favor the United States any more. This alone is enough for many Americans to suddenly rediscover the communist face of China, which they had chosen not to notice for nearly 15 years.

Political unrest in Tibet, then, has an impact on China's relation with the US. Beijing has already protested to the State Department against the freedom given to the Dalai Lama to carry out political propaganda in the United States. The manner in which the international wire services are highlighting Tibetan protests against Chinese dominations, and the role American and European tourists seem to be playing as sources of information will most probably feed Chinese apprehensions that the Dalai Lama's American visit might create greater problems for them in Tibet.

The incidents in Lhasa and other places in Tibet will also influence deliberations at the forthcoming 13th congress of Chinese Communist Party. The so-called conservatives may use them to argue against the Dengist political line of liberalization and opening up to the outside world. The so-called reform-minded will have to do a lot of explaining. It will not be surprising if the Tibetan events help the "conservatives" score over the 'reformist' in working out the CPC's

political line for the next five years.

Unrest in Tibet must not be allowed to influence the coming India-China negotiations. India must be very mindful of Chinese sensibilities about Tibet, even if some political elements in India, as well as the Tibetan community, try to raise the standard of Tibet's "independence". Indians should have the wisdom to realize that if ever the concept of Tibet's independence gains such ground, it will not remain confined to the two million people who live on the planet's roof, but roll down to influence many more millions who inhabit the foothills of the Himalayas.

### **Twin objectives**

With a correct stand on Tibet and Sympathy for China's handling of a delicate political issue (similar to several such issues now being handled by the Indian Government), the Indian side may find the Chinese team quite forthcoming on the matter of normalizing India-China relations. The talks should now aim at the border and laying an institutional framework for expanded mutual co-operation in trade, technology, agriculture, industry, culture and information.

Since the Delhi round of talks are slated to last six days, it should be possible, at a certain stage, to lift them up to the political level. A meeting between the Chinese team and Prime Minister, in which the latter rose no more than explain the principal thrust of his foreign policy, will be an excellent gesture on India's part to show that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi attaches great importance to rebuilding good neighborly relations with China.

### **Problems of China's empire**

Every great land empire has its problem with minorities, China no less than Russia. Whereas Russian expansionism and cultural aggression have been taken for granted since the Second World War, especially in the Baltic and central Asia, the Chinese have tended to

be overlooked. The popular view (chinese) race- a colonel Blimp view which allows no regional, racial, linguistic or cultural variety except perhaps in terms of cuisine.

China's record toward its ethic and religious minorities, whether during Imperial or Communist dynasties, is nothing to be proud of; there is an inherent racism in Han attitudes and an assumption of cultural superiority. For example, during the Cultural Revolution, Moslem Uigur tribesmen in western China were forced to raise pigs. This, together with the destruction of their mosques, caused thousands to flee to Soviet Central Asia, where presumably they later had to learn Russian.

The central Kingdom is a Han phenomena to which vassal states and tribes have always paid tribute. China's minority tend to reside on the state's borders where they have acted usually as buffer on the outside world. Authority in China comes from the center. When it is strong, Peking's control of its vassals is firm; when the center is weak, the outer parts of the empire tend to go their own ways. This has been the case with Tibet.

Poor Tibet! It has suffered much from Chinese chauvinism and communist excess. Tibetans were promised they could continue their way of life uninterrupted. They were forced into Communes; their lamas were divided up into patriots and class enemies (the former being young monks who were encouraged to inform on their superiors); their social system was branded a feudal anachronism; they staple which they mixed with butter. Han settlers arrived. Chinese became the language of official instruction. Cadres were paid hardship allowance for being at a far outpost of the empire; their children were educated separately.

In 1959 Tibetans rebelled against Chinese authority; as they had in 1913 when the Dalai Lama returned from exile in India, Chinese troops were expelled and the Dalai Lama declared the country independent. China was a different country in 1959, united under Mao Tse-tung and no more to tolerate dissent, particularly on its border

with India. This time the Chinese army remained and the Dalai Lama fled to India. The "holocaust" of the Cultural Revolution came upon Tibet when the Red Guards blew up with dynamite over three quarters of the country's lamaseries and shrines. It was cultural chauvinism on a grand scale.

The anti-Chinese demonstration of the past two weeks- led, significantly, by lamas nationalism. Although the cause has a romance which the west finds appealing, it has little chance of ever being realized. The Chinese say they are re-establishing control over a wayward tributary. Nowadays, control on Peking's terms has usually come to mean the destruction of non-Chinese civilizations.

*The Independent, Tuesday, October 6*

### An internal affair

The Lhasa violence triggered by the Tibetans demand for independence once again reveals how often can the human rights question cast a shadow on efforts to forge national integration in a pluralistic society, especially under a totalitarian system. Considerable political significance has been attached to the demonstrations by the Tibetan Lamas as it more or less coincides with the Dalai Lama's visit to the United States. The Lamas have appealed to the United Nations and the countries of the west to support Tibet's independence demand. As expected, the Chinese Government has been severe in dealing with the many unrest, causing several deaths and leaving none in doubt, including the many foreign tourist in Lhasa. That it would stop at nothing to restore peace.

Beijing's tough stance was anticipated. Even before the Dalai Lama arrived in the US, the Chinese embassy in Washington expressed grave concern at the exiled Tibetan leader's political itinerary in America. This included a scheduled address before the House of Representative sub committee on human rights and international

organizations. China clearly suspects that some American elements are trying to rake up the Tibetan question which thinks it had sorted out in 1959 once and for all. What Beijing has not told the world enough about is the damage that rampaging Chinese activities caused in Tibet during the cultural revolution. The mistakes of that period have been admitted under Mr. Deng. Beijing claims that 802 religious cases "wrongly" handled during the cultural revolution have been redressed, 37,000 pieces of monastery property returned and 743 religious places repaired, in addition to the rebuilding at the cost of \$92,000 of the former residence of the Dalai Lama in Qinghai province. This is an impressive performance, but the intensity of the violence by the Tibetans suggests that they do not think their rights have been restored. It is thus that the Chinese leadership will continue to face question about what they are doing to protect human rights in Tibet.

Many in India will see in the Lhasa incidents the trampling of the Tibetans human rights. While it is natural and unexceptionable to sympathize with fellow humans who feel aggrieved about violation of their rights, there is need to be discreet about reaction in these matters. The Tibetans demands are an internal affair of China, and should be allowed to affect Sino-Indian relations. The eight round of Sino-Indian border talks are due on November 13 and the two countries should avail themselves of the opportunity to make progress on the boundary question and find ways to improve their relations. The November talks could prove to be an occasion for New Delhi and Beijing to lift the dialogue to the political level so that the estrangement between the two neighbors is brought to an end at the earliest.

*The Hindustan Times, October 7, 1987*

## **India's role in Sino-Tibetan tangle**

**S.M Krshntry**

It can be expected that Mr Narasimha Rao will use his forthcoming visit to China to break the ice over the question of Tibet. Though the issue is bilateral one between China and Tibet, its complexity as well as neighborhood compulsions make it trilateral in nature. Some progress has made, thanks to the labor put in by the Indo-Chinese 'working group. But the core problems is that of the contested status of Tibet. Hence the need for readjusting priorities.

### **Not enough**

It is not enough to say that we cannot interfere in Sino-Tibetan affair when the intention is only to offer help and take initiative to clear the accumulated debris of distrust following the 1959 rebellion which precipitated the Chinese attack on India. Rather than stand apart, India can be honest broker, for it has no stake other then the desire for a permanent peace.

During the hundreds of years of history, India and China never went to war. It was only the result of the British imperialistic ambition in extending their influence into Tibet which unfortunately caused the conflagration between them. Indian independence was followed by China's military occupation of Tibet and war like advances, culminating finally in the 1962 "teaching of the lesson" war. Tempers have cooled down since and it is time that a solution is found.

The urgency lies in current troubled times after the end of the cold war. The unipolar new world order is destined to overtake us even before we can realize its impact on the lives of ancient nation. Europe is trying to put up a united front. Russia and the erstwhile Soviet Republic are broken beyond repair. The permanent and other members of the security council cannot but play a subservient role. The new world order is shaping a "mandated" democratic order. Unresolved situations, such as between India and China and China and Tibet can lend themselves to exploitation. Words like democracy, human rights, communism or terrorism are being used to victimize the weak. Is the Sino-Indian tangle so intractable that the three will not even attempt to act pragmatically?

It is futile to imagine that China will be different if it adopted democracy. Soviet case is there for all to see. What is important is the firmly cemented relationships in this part of Asia. China should take the lead to establish the next 2,000 years of peace and, at the same time shed its attitude of punishing India or Tibet for the historical fault and lapses of the British empire. Changing world environment should be taken as a warning signal. India and China, two of the fastest friends in history, should restore their old relationship.

There seems to be urgency at the moment for the demarcation of the border between the China and India. The sprawling territory of Tibet kept a part the two giants over the centuries. China, has asked for normalcy in trade, commerce, industry and technology. It should now extend this process to bury the hatched through a political settlement. Beijing will miss this golden opportunity once the Dalai Lama, exiled in Dharamsala, is no more. For there could be any one else so enlightened and sympathetic as he is, and for various reasons, his personal seal alone will carry credit worthiness for the people and the world at large. Recently he said with emotion: "We may oppose the Chinese authorities, but we want good relation with Chinese people".

## Comprehensive treaty

What assurance other than a comprehensive treaty of friendship can guarantee the safety of a demarcated border in the contest of open encouragement to private or state terrorism and drug smuggling which recognize no borders, demarcated or otherwise? India and China both regard Tibet as autonomous. Independence and autonomy are variable terms, and neither China nor Tibet can alter the geophysical location of the other. Both are large countries. The greater the power given each, the greater will be the strength of mutual loyalty. That is the law of human behavior. But, for regional responsibilities, let Tibet continue its role of keeping them apart from any further wars.

In the words of professor S. Rinpoche, a learned lama of Dharamsala, "If a friendly and peaceful relationship can be established between India and China on a lasting and secure basis by sacrificing the legitimate aspirations of the Tibetan people, then we will not come in the way".

*The Times of India, August 27, 1993.*

## India on Tibet

In one sense India's response to the disturbances in Tibet is at once predictable and justified. It is predictable because since 1950 India has recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, for New Delhi, Tibet has been and remains Beijing's internal affair. And it is justified because ever since Dalai Lama took asylum in this country in 1959 along with thousands of followers, India has repeatedly advised him to refrain from conducting politics from its soil. Moreover, it is only legitimate that New Delhi should seek to create a proper atmosphere for the eighth round of border talks which are scheduled to begin in New Delhi on November 13. These negotiations have virtually been stalemated since the Chinese reiterated their claims in the

eastern sector in the concluding stages of the sixth round. The Chinese intrusion in the Sumdorong Chu valley in Beijing last July. It is, therefore, understanding that New Delhi has tried to ensure that Tibet does not become an issue between the two countries on the eve of the forth-coming round of talks.

There are, however, some other aspect of the Tibet problems which cannot be disregarded. First, continued Tibetan resentment against China has nothing to do with the presence of the Dalai Lama in India. It is the product of Chinese action, especially the deliberate suppression of peaceful people and their distinct culture, and the immigration of Han Chinese into Tibet so much so that, according to the Dalai Lama, they have come to outnumber the Tibetans 7.5 million against 6 million. Second, there is nothing to suggest that Tibetan refugees in India have been in the position to launch a separatist movement from Dharamsala. Even the Dalai Lama's call for civil disobedience cannot amount to much in concrete terms and must be regarded as a token gesture of solidarity with his people in an extremely difficult situation. Third, as a member of the world community India cannot be different to the anguish of the Tibetan people. By what other right does it condemn apartheid in South Africa? The Chinese authorities have now begun a full-scale crackdown in Tibet; they have already made large-scale arrests, more of such harsh measures can be safely predicted in coming months. Fourth, China's public reaction to the Dalai Lama's statements has been deliberately exaggerated in order to score a propaganda point over India and to justify tough measures in Tibet. Finally, it is a safe bet that the Chinese stand in the border talks will not be influenced in the slightest degree by New Delhi's helpful stance on Tibet.

*The Times of India, October 10, 1987*

# **India now closer to China on Tibet**

**P. Stobdan**

India's Tibet policy has faced considerable stress in the recent years. While the attempts to improve the relationship with China have started bearing fruit, the Tibetan refugee in India have become apprehensive and restive. This has led to a section of people to question the wisdom of the decision to provide refugee to the Dalai Lama and over one lakh of his followers 36 years ago.

## **Consistent position**

India has always maintained a consistent position on Tibet, recognizing it as an autonomous region of China even while there strains in Sino-Indian relations following the 1962 Chinese aggression. Even then, India's hospitality towards the Tibetans has been perceived as covert support for their independence and Beijing has always expressed difficulty in accepting the distinction New Delhi makes between the Dalai Lama's spiritual and political activity in India.

India and China have only now begun to trust each other after a long spell of uneasy relations. Some progress has been made to find a pragmatic and mutually beneficial solution to the difficult border question in the near future. The progress in the Sino-Indian rapprochement has inevitably put restraints on the anti-China activities of Tibetan refugee in India. This has led to Tibetan Youth accusing Indian leaders of bartering away the Tibetan hopes for independence. These were further enhanced because of President Clinton's commitment to a tougher line than his predecessors on China's hu-

man right violations in Tibet. Several developments including the Clinton administration's reception for the Dalai Lama last year in a somewhat more formal manner than on previous occasions, two Senate Bills in the U.S Congress linking China's MFN trading status to stopping the population transfer of ethnic Chinese into Tibet, establishment of the Voice of America Tibetan Service, the British Prime Minister's decision to meet the Dalai Lama and the worldwide attention to the violation of human right in Tibet have inspired Tibetans to question India's position.

The recently-held world parliamentarians convention on Tibet in New Delhi must be viewed against the backdrop of these developments. The timing of convention was linked to the annual Sino-US negotiation on MFN although the U.S. secretary of state, Mr. Warren Christopher, said that he did not "foresee the U.S taking any action such as unilateral recognition of Tibet because of high cost that it would invoke in other areas". However, Mr Clinton's appeal to Beijing to begin talks with the Dalai Lama must be seen in the context of the current U.S effort to gauge China's internal political events.

*The Times of India, April 20, 1994*

## India and uprising in Tibet

Satish Ch. Kakati

The recent uprisings of the Tibetans at Lhasa and some other towns against the Central Government of China are a significant development in the relationship between Tibet and China. This is not for the first time that the Tibetans rebelled against Beijing. There have been a number of uprising since the Chinese troops entered Tibet in October, 1950 was, however on a large scale that led to the flight of the spiritual and temporal head of the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama, with about a lakh of his followers for refuge in India granted political asylum to the Dalai Lama and his people but did not allow him to set up a Government-in-exile; in fact, New Delhi asked the Dalai Lama not to carry on any political activities, directly or indirectly, against the People's Republic of China. Even this minimum assistance shown to the Dalai Lama on humanitarian ground annoyed the Chinese authorities and it is believed that the unprovoked aggression of China on India's north-eastern border in 1962 was an expression of Beijing's profound displeasure on New Delhi's action in providing refuge to the Dalai Lama.

Notwithstanding the absence of their spiritual leader from Tibet for 28 long years the Tibetans have not reconciled themselves to Tibet being an integral part of China though it is what is called "a region of China". Tibet was given an autonomous status in 1950. It appears that the recent events in Lhasa and other places where the Tibetans including the Monks have launched anti-China movement amounts to an another bid to free Tibet from the Chinese shackles realizing that the autonomy status of the region has been gradually eroded by Beijing's grip. The Tibetans have also found that a large

ethnic group living in other parts of China, have immigrated to Tibet at the instance of the Chinese Government which the indigenous Tibetans apprehend will out number them thereby threatening the identity of the Tibetan people. The local people have seen in all this a design by Beijing to convert its political autonomy and cultural heritage as a Buddhist land governed by the Dalai Lama.

Historically, China had ruled Tibet from the 18th century. Her independence came in 1911. However, with the invasion of the country of Chinese troops on October, 1950, Tibet became a part of China again reasserting its control in 1951 with a Communist Government installed at Lhasa in 1953. On the death of Mao Zedong in 1974, the new regime headed by Deng Xiaoping initiated a liberal policy in China in place of the Cultural Revolution of the Mao regime. This liberal policy was applied to Tibet as well, but basically the changes were no different from China's traditional philosophy reaffirmed by Mao Zedong in 1949 that China would reexamine treaties concluded by China's previous government and will either "recognize, abrogate, revise or re-negotiate them". This in practice meant that the relation with Tibet as with other countries would undergo changes.

This age-long policy followed by the Chinese rulers including the Communist leaders has led to border questions with each of her neighbors the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. On the basis of historical records territorial aspirations of China have been one of the characteristics of China's national life. China has never viewed its frontiers as "fixed" either by geography or by history. Over the centuries China has regarded itself as "the civilized world". To them, territory once won for civilization must not be given back to "barbarism". This has been Chinese philosophy and psychological background all through the decades, and this has taught them that a territory which once belonged to it must remain forever so and, if "lost" under certain circumstances must be recovered by what the Chinese call "war of liberation" or by assimilation. In-

deed, the Chinese empire had been built up on this philosophy through 3000 years. China believes that to deny this right to assimilate and influence the countries which formed parts of the Chinese empire would amount to China's failure to "recover" her lost territory which Beijing is not prepared to accept.

China's emergence as a Communist nation did not alter its traditional policy in regard to her "lost" territories. Annexation of Tibet in 1950 was a apt instance; its unprovoked aggression on India's northeastern border in 1962 was another. And there is no valid reason to believe that Beijing has departed from its old policy as its intrusion into the Sumdorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh in July last year which is yet to be vacated shows though this might be a pressure tactic on the part of the Government of China to settle the border issue with India without delay.

In the context Beijing is unlikely to relax its hold on Tibet, not to speak on restoring it to its pre-1950 status. The recent uprising has been put down as was expected and steps taken against any future rebellion by the Tibetans. What is feared is that the Chinese rulers at Beijing will let loose a series of repressive measures including arrests, even execution, of those who were responsible for the recent unrest in Tibet.

It is necessary to examine the Government of India's policy on Tibet before and after Independence. The British Government was consistently opposed to any interference in the affairs of Tibet after it was incorporated into China. Whitehall was, however, interested in delineating the border between India, China and Tibet. Accordingly, at the Simla conference of 1914 at which Sir Henry McMahon as British plenipotentiary, Lonchen Shastra as Tibet's were present while Evan Chen represented China. After prolonged negotiation the boundary was delineated. This is what is known as McMahon Line. It cover the distance of 820 miles of which 640 miles are between India and Tibet from the tri-junction of Bhutan, Tibet and Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Present Chinese Government is the successor to the Governments in Tibet between 1914-

1950, and as such Beijing is bound to accept the obligations imposed on it by the Agreement of 1914. But the MacMohan Line continues to be a bone of contention between India and China with the political asylum given to the Dalai Lama being an irritant in the Sino-Indian relationship since 1959.

The recent agitation of the Tibetans against Beijing has added a new dimension to the unresolved issue of the border issue vis-a-vis the McMohan Line. Despite seven rounds of talks at various levels for resolving the issue it is still uncertain whether the eight round slated for November 18 will make any progress. In the context the unrest in Lhasa and other places to which the Dalai Lama has extended its support and suggested a five-point program to settle the Tibeto-Chinese problems was potential for troubles in future. To this Government of China has taken a serious exception as in the opinion of the Chinese rulers, the Dalai Lama's reaction to the uprising is a political activity, New Delhi has since asked the Dalai Lama not to carry on any such activities from the soil of India, because that would seriously prejudice the outcome of the India-China talks next month. However, some watchers of the Himalayan affair have been some what puzzled at the Government of India's attitude and have raised their eyes brown as to why India has been silent on the current event in Tibet and above these two factors comes to Gorbachev peace offensive and overtures to various Asian countries including Japan and the detente with US and Western Europe.

Both US and Japan have down-graded China in their strategic and economic calculations. The Chinese on the other hand found the Gorbachev's Soviet Union more responsive in regards to expansion of trade and technology transfer. The Soviet Union has also given up its rigid stand on boundary and have accepted fair and reasonable solutions to be riverain boundary. China finds that it can no longer play the US card vis-a-vis Soviet Union or the Soviet Union card vis-a-vis the US in the light of US Soviet detente. Therefore out goes through the window the three worlds concept and in comes

the peaceful coexistence and cooperative international order.

Most of the Marxist nation are giving up the idea of total control over economy and moving towards mixed economy. In China in the recent year privatization has unleashed enormous productivity and demand for consumer goods. In a sense, Deng and late Lui Shao Chi were for such reforms even in late fifties and early sixties following the failure of Mao's great leap forward. Mao's attacks on Nehru and finally the military attack of 1962 on India were parts of the power struggle in China in which at that time Mao emerged victorious and genocidal Cultural Revolution. While Deng is not in a position to repudiate Mao, on his foreign policy of that time since he compromised with Mao, his warm references to Nehru is the nearest he could come to say "sorry" about 1962.

Improvement of relations between India and China would be if world wide consequences. Along with the improvement in the Sino-Soviet relations this development will help to stabilize the situation in Asia and reduce the leverage of US in the continent. India's neighbor too may find it difficult to play the China card vis-a-vis India. China's relation with India's neighbors is an inverse function of its relationship with India.

One hopes that the proposed joint working group consisting of the Indian foreign secretary and the Chinese vice minister will come up with some confidence building measures in regards to border as suggested in the Times of India columns of 5th and 6th December. A fair and reasonable solution on the boundary can only be on the basis of natural geographic features acceptable by China in the case of Burma and in the West alternative natural geographic features could be discussed for mutual acceptability. Having looked at all the positive achievements flowing out of the visit one has also to utter a few words of caution. The zig-zag in Chinese policies in the past 39 years have already been referred and therefore there should be no euphoria on the outcome of the present visit. When dealing with the Chinese one has to bear in mind that there are many a slip between the cup and the lip.

There is a reference to Tibet in the communique. India has accepted that Tibet is an autonomous region of China. Even the Dalai Lama in his speech distributed to Strasbourg European Parliament has accepted this position and has pressed for real autonomy for Tibet as its nomenclature implies. The Chinese and the Tibetans headed by Dalai Lama expect to hold discussions next year and the venue, timing and level of representation are yet to be fixed. This fact is not likely to be without effect on India-China working group deliberations. The Chinese may bargain hard on the border and may expect India to pressure the Dalai Lama in exchange for a fair and reasonable settlement. On the Indian side the two are totally unrelated issues.

A good beginning has been made. There is still a far way to go before one can be confident that India and China have established good neighborly relations. The way in which the border issue is settled will surely indicate the degree of Chinese goodwill and keenness to have the Indian friendship. By this time surely the Chinese know that there is a continuity and objectivity in the Indian world view and any settlement with India will be a durable one. The Indian Prime Minister by going to China has taken the extra step to extend the hand of friendship. The first indications are that the Chinese have grasped that hand with warmth and friendliness.

*Assam Tribune, October 16, 1987*

## Tibet and Indian diplomacy

Nikhil Chakravarty

In the hurly-burly of day to day politics, Tibet has receded quite a distance in our horizon. Even when we talk about the political environment in our neighborhood, Tibet rarely figures in it.

In the discussion with the Chinese, whether in official or non-official capacity, at the government or political level, we have practically ceased to raise the question of Tibet and the Tibet people. But the Chinese always make it a point to impress upon us the benefit of Chinese rule for the Tibetan people and almost inevitably remind us-sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly- that India recognizes Tibet as being a part of the Chinese people's Republic.

What is intriguing is that even in the early fifties when India-China relations were raised to a state of euphoria, Tibet invariably figured in the talks between the leaders of the two countries, and India's special position with regards to Tibet was conceded by the Chinese side, so much so that the Indian Prime Minister's interest and concern about the Dalai Lama and his relations with the Panchen Lama did not evoke the Chinese criticism that this amounted to interference in the late fifties, when with the simultaneous launching by China of a persecution drive against the Dalai Lama forcing him to escape with his entourage to India in the summer of 1959, came the first armed clashes by the Chinese border guards with Indian frontier patrols culminating in the blitz invasion of the Chinese army into the Indian territory in October 1962.

The irony of it all has been that what is known as the India-China border talks in the last thirty years and more, really related to the frontier line between India and Tibet, while the Dalai Lama, who alone is acknowledged by the Tibetan people as their leader, both spiritual and Temporal, has been forced into exile in this country throughout these three decades and a half. If one were to go by past precedents-which the Chinese are fond of quoting to substantiate any claims in the international context- then the Tibetan side should have a place in any India-China border talks.

The Dalai Lama's dramatic arrival in India along with nearly a hundred thousand of his following was an event whose full historic significance was perhaps not fully perceived at the time by most political observers. It was not just a leader of a country being forced to become a refugee on another country. The entire mystique of the Tibetan politics suddenly came out into the open before the entire world. What is indeed noteworthy coming out of the cloistered retreat of Lhasa, adjusted themselves with remarkable felicity, transmitting effectively their message, both spiritual Dalai Lama has grown as a world figure, impressing one by his serenity and wisdom. And he has installed into his loyal following a sense of dignity and purpose-no feeling of depression, no air of a lost cause. Instead, an amazing reservoir of silent confidence, reflecting the sheer majesty of their native land-by no means a lost horizon.

Looking back, one has to concede that after the first flush of excitement on the Dalai Lama's appearance on the world stage, there came a phase of low tide in the international interest in Tibet, almost synchronizing with the focus shifting to Deng Xiaoping's modernization program in China. In the last three years the pendulum has swung again, particularly after the Tiananmen massacre, and there has come over a marked resurgence of interest in Tibet as could be perceived during the Dalai Lama's recent tour abroad. With the end of the Cold War, the concern for human rights has become a major plank in the consciousness of the world public and this is reflected in the policy posture of many governments. The

issue of human rights figured prominently in Clinton's election campaign and has become a key item in the new Administration's Policy program.

This was demonstrated in ample measure during the Dalai Lama's recent visit to Washington, where his meeting with President Clinton proved to be more than a formality. And the British Prime Minister on his part moved beyond his old reticence whigs meeting the Tibetan leader. It needs to be noted that of a conference of international law specialists held in London in January this year upheld the Tibetan people's rights to self-determination. World attention to the violation of human rights in Tibet has been intensified and has become widespread. Apart from such bodies as the Amnesty International and Asia Watch, among others, this issue has taken up by the International Commission of Jurists and France Liberties.

Viewed in the background of renewed world-wide interest and concern about Tibet, one cannot but notice the absence of any corresponding campaign in our country in defence of human rights in Tibet as we have had for South Africa, Nepal or for that matter Burma, despite the fact that the Dalai Lama and his entire government-in-exile are located in Dharamsala. The reason for this is perhaps a misplaced fear that any campaign for human rights in Tibet might damage the prospects of restoring normalcy in our relations with China. It may be noted that the Dalai Lama himself has been saying unreservedly that he welcomes the progressive development of China's economy and standing in the world, and along with it, he wants the extension of democracy and well-being of the people of Tibet.

Briefly, the points of concern about China's policy in Tibet may be noted here. First in this list the large-scale colonization of the Han population in Tibet. The official figure is that there are only 90,000 in the what is specified as the Autonomous Region of Tibet, whose population numbers just three million. It is estimated that if the total Chinese population transfer continues, it could soon bring about a demographic transformation by which the Tibetans would be re-

duced to a minority in their own country.

Secondly, the growing militarization of the Tibet region. Apart from the increase in stationing of Chinese garrisons in Tibet is the setting up of a very important nuclear weapons in Tibet, Research and Development Centre, known as the Ninth Academy in Tibet which is responsible for designing China's nuclear arsenal, detonation developing and radiochemistry. Several dozens of China's nuclear warheads are located in Tibet. Missile bases have been set up in Tibet what was officially described a "chemical defence manoeuvred in the high altitude zone to test newly-developed equipment"

This aspect of China's policy in Tibet has a direct bearing on our country's strategic concern. There could be no other plausible target for these nuclear weapons and missiles in Tibet except India. In this context, the Dalai Lama's repeated call for transforming the whole of Tibet into a weapons-free zone of peace assumes pointed significance. In his well-known Strasbourg Proposal in 1988, he called Tibet's "historic status as a neutral buffer state contributing to the stability of the entire continent".

Thirdly, the question of dumping radioactive nuclear waste in Tibet. It is not known as to how much of radioactive waste comes out of the top secret Ninth Academy of the Chinese defence establishment in Tibet. It is known that Tibet has the world's biggest uranium reserves and there are reports of many local Tibetans having perished after drinking contaminated water in the proximity of a uranium mine in Amdo. In 1991, Green peace exposed plans to ship toxic sludge from the USA to China for use as "fertilizer" in Tibet. And there are other reports of certain European firms negotiating with the Chinese authorities for dumping nuclear toxic wastes in Tibet. The fall-out is a matter of urgent concern for all those neighboring countries through which flow the great rivers of Asia originating from Tibet: Oxus, Indus, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Mekong, apart from the two great rivers of China, Yangtze and Huang Ho. If these rivers are polluted, it will be a frightening hazard for millions of people on the Asian mainland, particularly for

the people in South Asia of which the two most populated are India and Bangladesh.

In three decades and more there has been serious environmental destruction for Tibet. There has been massive deforestation for the rich forest belts of Tibet. In Amdo province alone, it is estimated that about 50 million trees have been felled in the last forty years. Southern Tibet has been equally denuded of forests. The Tibetans do not use much timber, most of the wood product have gone to the other parts of China. This massive deforestation has led to serious soil erosion and flood. Today, Brahmaputra and Indus, Yangtze and Huang Ho are among the five most heavily silted rivers in the world. Deforestation endangers the monsoon balance, which is of direct concern for us. With the denuding of the great pastures of Tibet, desertification has begun.

All these are matters of direct concern for many countries. Without infringing upon the sovereignty of any Latin American country, the ecological preservation of the Amazon river basin inspired a remarkable International initiative. Similarly, it is time that the preservation of the unique environmental balance of Tibet became the concern of the world community, in which the countries directly affected next door have to come forward. This is an issue of direct international concern as important as the upholding of human rights, since it endangers the very life and living of billions of people linked by nature of Tibet, its flora and fauna.

Even when the Dalai Lama arrived in India in 1959, he underlined that he and his people "do not cherish any feelings of enmity and hatred against the great Chinese people" and sought "the creation of a favorable climate" for negotiations for a peaceful settlement. This is understandable because these were the years of the Cultural Revolution and the rule of the Gang of Four which proved disastrous for China. It was only in February 1979 that Gyalo Thondup, an elder brother of the Dalai Lama, received an invitation from Deng Xiaoping and made a private visit to Beijing where he was met by high Chinese officials. He was also received by Deng Xiaoping him-

self.

Since then, negotiations have dragged on. In the course of these tenuous contacts, the Dalai Lama himself wrote a letter to Deng Xiaoping in March 1981, emphasizing the need for "our common wisdom in a spirit of tolerance and broad mindedness". Although there was no direct response to his letter, the contacts continued, in the course of which the Chinese Government said that everything could be discussed except the question of Tibet's complete independence. The Prime Minister, Li Peng repeated this when he came to Delhi on December 1991.

In September 1992, the Tibetan side appointed a three-number delegation and sought to resume the talks with the Chinese Government. While awaiting Beijing's response, the Dalai Lama has made it clear that he would like to start negotiations for the peaceful solution of the Tibet problem without any preconditions. He, however, threw in a significant suggestion that China could take the "one country-two-systems" approach with regard to Tibet as it has about Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Tibet today presents an important issue before Indian diplomacy. Without in any way changing its formal stand on Tibet- no matter whatever might have been the internal controversy over the wisdom of that stand- New Delhi can certainly raise all the issues of direct concern, strategic and environmental, that the situation in Tibet poses for this country. Meanwhile, there is need for a broad-based movement in our country for greater awareness about what is happening in Tibet today, so that the government may be in position to take up with the Chinese Government the concern and interests of our people with regard to our northern neighbor, Tibet.

*Economic Times, December 1, 1991*

## Tibet liberation movement

A.D Nath

As it was well expected there was a bloodiest protest since 1959 against Chinese rule in Tibet on September 27, 1987 (which is still continuing) and which coincided with China's national Day, when Tibetans in Lhasa took out a pro-independence march for their liberation from the Chinese imperialism. This erupted outside the holiest Tibetan Shrine, the Jokhang temple when Tibetans holding pro-independence march, laid siege to a police station and some other places putting them to flames which resulted into several killings and injuring of hundreds of Tibetans.

The Chinese imperialists have blamed the riots as what they called a hand-work of the clique led by the Dalai Lama and his Government in exile in India. It is well known that in 1959 the spiritual leader of Tibetans, the Dalai Lama along with about a lakh of Tibetans, were forced to flee into exile in India when the Chinese captured Tibet by force and enslaved it.

When I wrote an article captioned Tibet Versus Dalai Lama in April, 1987 raising the issue of Tibet's slavery at the Chinese hands and need for its liberation, Mr. Tsering Tashi, the information Officer of the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at New Delhi wrote a rejoinder in newspapers assuring the Dalai Lama and his men in India are doing their best for the liberation of Tibet and they are in appreciation of this writer for his concern and support for the Tibetan people's struggle.

Meanwhile, in a sharp reaction to the Chinese charges on the 27th

September 1987 uprising, Dalai Lama, now in Delhi appealed to the International Community and Human Rights groups to intervene and stop, what he called wanton Chinese repression in Tibet. But mere making appeals are not sufficient as for the liberation of Tibet it is high time to launch a constant liberation movement in that land forcing Chinese to leave the country as they are a permanent threat to India also because of their border by virtue of their occupation of Tibet.

Tibet, the world's largest plateau at the heart of the Asians continent, is 15,000 feet above sea-level. It borders northern, Nepal, Bhutan and Burma. Beyond the Karakorum range lie Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USSR. The loss of Tibet to China remains one of the most dramatic and upsetting stories of the past 28 years. Yet, few people have heard it in full and fewer are still aware of its present day dispensation. Tibetan people have lived in a hell on earth amidst unparalleled suffering at every turn and even without the right to their own lives. Under the Chinese slavery thousands of Tibetans old and young, have been mercilessly executed or starved to death. Those who have survived have been forced to labor in camps day and night, with the stars as cloths and the moon as a hat, as Phuntsok Wangyal has reported recently from Tibet.

As per the reports besides killing more than ten lakh Tibetans to have their control over Tibet, the Chinese in total disregard to the human rights and civilized thinking, have forcibly sterilized thousands of young men and women there. They still shamelessly, force Tibetan women to marry Chinese invaders but forbid Tibetan men from marrying Chinese women. They have raised the minimum age of marriage and have introduced severe economic sanctions against those who do not follow their forcibly imposed marriage laws. A western publication titled from Liberation to Liberalization mentions that the Chinese forcibly take children from Tibetans, who are never seen by the parents again. They snatch children for indoctrinations, brain wash and training in China in an attempt to bring up a new generation of Tibetans totally alien to their race and culture.

In fact the Chinese in a planned manner have carried out a ruthless campaign to exterminate Tibetans both as a race and as a civilization.

The pathetic condition of the people in Tibet and the last 27th September 1987 uprising in Lhasa, the biggest since 1959, are of great significance for India. Besides being sore over the sad plight of the Tibetans in Tibet. India has to realize that only because of Tibet's occupation by the more areas, they have already occupied several thousand kilometer of Indian land in 1962 and are still hankering after for more and more which is evident from their claim over Arunachal Pradesh.

Also, it is no secret, that China is all out to destabilize India in collaboration with Pakistan. Today, most of the Khalistan terrorists are carrying Chinese weapons including AK 47 rifles to kill Indians. In the seventies, the so-called People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by Bishenwar in Manipur had the first batch of anti-nationals trained directly by the Chinese. And the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) the pro-Peking insurgent group, which replaced pro-Phizo elements in Nagaland, has been actively backed by China. At present, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), an offshoot closer to the Chinese and, as reported, they have been asked by the Chinese to work in close collaboration with NSCN to create disturbance in North-West of India.

It is no secret that ever since the occupation of Tibet by Chinese and the shelter given to the Tibetans led by Dalai Lama in India, relations between China and India started worsening, culminating into 1962 border conflict between the two. It was hoped that the Tibet problem would be solved in course of time. But unfortunately there seemed very little hope, taking into account absence of any liberation movement by the Tibetans. But the 27th September revolt and some stray incidents earlier have aroused new hope. It is opportune moment for all concerned to take up the cause of liberation of Tibet from Chinese occupation.

## **Li Peng's visit and after**

**Inder Malhotra**

Just before his ceremonial departure for home the visiting Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Li Peng held Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao's hand in both his hand and remarked: "This is the end of a rather good visit and a fruitful one. Don't you think so ?" What reply, if any, Mr. Narasimha Rao gave is not known. But Mr Li's sanguine assessment was not shared by vocal members of parliament's consultative committee on foreign affairs which met within a few hours of the India-China joint communique being issued.

At this meeting, the BJP leader and former foreign Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee joined the far more strident, Mr. Ram Jethmalani and others in complaining that this country had conceded "too much" to China- a view which is echoed fairly widely also in the press comment on Mr. Li's five-day sojourn. The criticism of the joint communique and by implication of the Indian handling of the Li visit focuses on two points. First, that New Delhi had given satisfaction to the Chinese over Tibet without receiving from Beijing any quid pro quo in relation to legitimate and serious Indian concerns over Kashmir, especially in the light of Pakistans proxy war. Secondly, that no progress worth name had been made on the vexed but vital boundary issue. This is something which had been publicly conceded by the Prime Minister before the committee's meeting. But as Mr. Narasimha Rao had hastened to add, this was exactly as expected. Some useful decisions on the details of the problem has been taken but there was no major headway.

Evidently, this did not satisfy, some members of the consultative committee. Mr. Jethmalani in particular, asked for a "cold blooded" and "hard headed" plan to get back Indian territory occupied by China though he does not seem to have specified what this game-plan could be. It would be easier to deal with the criticism if we keep in mind the baleful intrusion of wishful thinking and make believe in the broad Indian approach to foreign policy in general and India-China relations in particular. Sad experience in the past has done nothing to diminish this proclivity.

Thus it was that undue even untenable expectations about the Li visit were engendered. Ironically, this happened despite commendable clarity of thinking in South Block decision makers who were under no illusion. They knew that the message from China was friendly but that there were limits to how far China would go. And yet thanks partly to the excessive emphasis placed on the first prime ministerial visit in three decades and partly because of media speculation- euphoria of sorts did develop. Some optimistic souls even convinced themselves that Mr. Li was coming in search of a "strategic alliance" with India.

The rationale behind this strange assumption was that China was "isolated" that it was in deep trouble in Tibet and that it wanted to "counter" the US attempt to impose an iniquitous new world order. From this it was but small jump to conclude that in order to gain Indian cooperation China might not have any hesitation to go the whole hog to endorse the Indian position on Kashmir. Therein lay the roots of the unfulfilled expectations of a quid pro quo.

Curiously, none of the authors of these naive ideas paused to ponder that China was unlikely to sacrifice in one fell swoop, the leverage it has built up in Pakistan through three decades of useful political support and generous military supplies. Similarly, it should have been easy to perceive that not with standing the overblown rhetoric emanating from Beijing and despite the un-expected set of principles that should guide the world, as outlined in the joint communiqué, it is no part of China's policy to launch a crusade against the

U.S. China's main objective vis-a-vis the United States is to continue to get year after year, the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status in trade matters.

If it was a mistake to entertain unrealistic expectations about the Li visit, it would be an equally grievous error to decry if we underplay the visit's outcome which may be undramatic but is positive enough. It is in this context that Tibet, Kashmir, the boundary issue and all other matters ought to be considered.

Doubtless, China is paranoid about Tibet, as it well might be. Despite its massive repression- against which there is understandable outcry especially at a time when human rights are the top of the international agenda- it has not been able to control the situation in Tibet even to the extent it has done in Xinjiang. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama's international stature has risen. He has acquired devoted following among very eminent people in the west. That he was received by President Bush in the Oval office and by Mr. John Major in Downing Street speaks for itself.

No wonder then that in the latest communique the Chinese have expressed themselves about the situation in Tibet and the activities of "Tibetan elements" in India more sharply than they had done in the document issued after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China three years ago. But then that is the Chinese statement of their position.

In a draft of the communique that Beijing had sent to New Delhi in advance the Chinese side had wanted a statement by India that it 'respect' the Chinese view of Tibet being an "indivisible part of China". India politely declined to do so. All it agreed to was to repeat exactly what had been stated in the 1988 communique. As Mr. Narasimha Rao has pertinently pointed out, to reiterate an established position cannot be called "giving away" something.

If Kashmir is not mentioned in the communique by name, it is because of Indian choice. The Chinese statement that all disputes in the region must be solved bilaterally and peacefully was considered adequate. In any case, it is a marked change from the days when the

Chinese habitually used to endorse the Pakistani cry for self-determination. Moreover, there are a number of items or ideas the Chinese wanted included in the communique but were left out because India would not endorse them. On human rights, the Chinese wanted the right to subsistence and development to be given precedence over all other human rights. India once again refused. While agreeing that this right was a basic one, India also insisted that human rights were "indivisible" and universal.

In any case, diplomatic communiqües are like bikini bathing suits. They conceal more than they reveal. One curious statement the Chinese had put into their draft and was exercised by the Indian side was that neither China nor India sought "hegemony in south Asia". Another statement, implicitly critical of the dispatch of the IPKF to Sri Lanka was also cut out.

This would give some food for thought to those who talk glibly of a strategic India- China alliance. But the other side of the coin is that in today's circumstances failure to grasp whatever opportunity arises to expand India-China understanding would be a tragic folly. And this brings one to the border question. To expect that the issue can be solved overnight is to be unrealistic. Decisions taken to upgrade the functioning of the Joint Working Group, to have a political review periodically of the JWG's progress and to take concrete steps to ensure peace and tranquilly on the Line of Control (whose delineation is still unclear though the location of the border posts of both sides is well known) are not something to be sneezed at.

*National Herald, December 19, 1991*

## **China makes Tibet its nuclear dumping yard**

**Gursharan S. Dhanjal**

Uranium, as a source of atomic energy, was never a threat to world peace in Buddhist Tibet, but now may pose a great danger even to the survival of humanity. China, after its forcible occupation of Tibet, not only made it a dumping yard of nuclear waste but has started extracting the heavy white metal.

China is believed to have nuclear manufacturing centres at Dhashu, which is the "Haibei Tibetan autonomous Prefecture" and Tongkhor in Amdo. The primary weapon research and design facility in Dhashu, constructed in the early sixties, is based near Lake Kokonor and is known as the Northern Nuclear Weapons research and Design Academy, or the "Ninth Academy" (because it was under the jurisdiction of the Ninth Bureau) which secretly designed all of China's early nuclear weapons, and remains today a serving research centre for detonation development and radiochemistry. This massive complex, which does not appear on any Chinese maps, served as China's "Los Alamos".

The Ninth Academy is believed to have dumped an unknown quantity of radioactive waste on the Tibetan plateau. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, waste disposal methods were reported to be casual in the extreme. Initially, waste was put in shallow, unlined landfills. The nature and quantity of radioactive waste generated by the Ninth Academy is still unknown. During the 1960s and 1970s, nuclear waste from the facility was disposed of in a

roughshod and haphazard manner. Nuclear waste from the Academy took a variety of forms-liquid or solid and gaseous waste. Liquid or solid waste would have been in adjacent land or water sites.

Official Chinese pronouncements have confirmed the existence in Tibet of the biggest uranium reserves in the world. Although their actual value will not be known for years, the fact remains that it is going to prove the future reserve bank of Tibet. Reports confirm that uranium is processed in Tibet itself and that many Tibetans died in 1992, after drinking contaminated water near a uranium mine in Ngapa, Amdo. According to a recent study, Nuclear Tibet, the first nuclear weapon was brought onto the Tibetan plateau in 1971 and stationed in Tsaidam basin, in northern Amdo. China currently has approximately 300-400 nuclear warheads, of which several dozens are believed to be in Tibet. As China's ground-based nuclear missiles can be transported and fired from trailers, it is difficult to locate and count missiles in certain areas.

To the west of Dhashu, China has established a nuclear missile deployment and launch site for DF-4 missiles in the Tsaidam basin in the early 1970s. The larger Tsaidam site has two missiles stored horizontally in tunnels near the launch pad. Fuel and oxidizer is stored in separate tunnels with lines to the launch pad. Another nuclear missile site in Tibet is located at Delingha, about 200 kms southwest of Larger Tsaidam, which houses DF-4s and the missile regimental headquarters for Amdo containing four associated launch site. A new nuclear division has also been established in Amdo. Four CSS-4 missiles are based there which have a range of 8,000 miles, capable of striking the US, Europe and all of Asia. In 1988, China carried out in Tibet what the *Jiefangjun Bao* of September 16, 1988 called "chemical defence manoeuvre in the high altitude zone to test newly- developed equipment". According to a TASS report of July 3, 1982 "China has been conducting nuclear tests in several areas of Tibet in order to determine the radiation levels among the people living in those parts".

China's nuclear missiles and facilities on the Tibetan plateau not

only undermine the area's traditional role as a buffer zone for the region but also exhibit two tendencies which typify China's policy on the disposal of toxic and nuclear waste in Tibet. The first is to deny in public charges that Tibet is used as a dumping ground for such wastes. This is usually accompanied by assertions that China intends to develop Tibet as a centre is typified by the repeated attempts of Chinese government agencies since 1984 to negotiate the disposal of hazardous waste in Tibet.

In 1984, the China Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation (CNEIC) offered Western countries nuclear waste disposal facilities at \$1,500 a kg. Simultaneously CNEIC appointed three West German companies as its agents for this purpose. (Nucleonics Week 1984). These developments were widely reported in the western press, and raised considerable controversy about the use of third world countries for storage of the West's nuclear waste. It is mentioned that around 4,000 tons of such waste was expected to be sent to China for a consideration of \$5.45 billion by the end of the 20th century.

Following the controversy the Chinese government remained silent about the actual execution of the plan. Many sources believe that the waste was ultimately disposed of partly in Tibet, since Tibet and Eastern Turkistan offered the only places under Chinese control where such disposal would not threaten its own populated areas. The area of Eastern Turkistan used by China for nuclear research and disposal is Lop Nor, immediately north of the Tibetan border. Dumping in either area would threaten the fragile, unpolluted ecology of the Tibetan plateau.

In 1987, negotiations took place to store spent fuel from West Germany in Tibet in return for German assistance in China's nuclear program. The Chinese policy of disposing toxic wastes in Tibet received further confirmation in 1991 when Greenpeace obtained documents revealing a plan to ship one and a half million tons of sewage sludge from the city of Baltimore, Maryland to Tibet for use as "fertilizer". A payment of \$1.4 million was offered with the first shipment of 20,000 tons. The brokers for the shipment were a

San Francisco based firm, California Enterprises, and the Hainan Sunlitt Group, a Chinese government agency.

Greenpeace noted that import documents described the shipment as "heni", the Chinese word for river silt, and commented: "Urban sewage sludge is not river silt, nor is it useful "fertilizer" when it is contaminated by household and industrial wastes. In the US, sludge from urban sewage treatment plants are chronically laced with toxic pollutants". In Chicago, the use of such wastes as garden fertilizer was withdrawn after heavy metals were found to be accumulating in the soil. Given the vast size of the Tibetan plateau and the fact that China goes to great lengths to keep all information about waste dumps a close secret, conclusive evidence about the location of dump sites is hard to obtain. Therefore the action agenda calls for the immediate appointment of an International Monitoring Commission to investigate the disposal of nuclear wastes in Tibet. Secondly all industries producing major pollutants, including nuclear facilities, should be closed down with immediate effect. And thirdly, governments and agencies negotiating the disposal of nuclear and toxic waste with China should make information related to such plans public. It is only then that a possible check on the clandestine Chinese nuclear activities could be exercised on the Roof of the World.

*Hindustan Times Tuesday February 18, 1995*

## **Perils of appeasement: India cannot ignore China's hegemonism**

**Kamlendra Kanwar**

India has been bending over backwards to keep China in good humor, be it the question of accepting its hegemony over Tibet or playing down its nuclear or missile threat to the region or cozy up to it in the face of American dictate to improve its human rights record. The latest Chinese nuclear test has characteristically evoked no official response from this country. It is always the Pakistan challenge that is cited whether it be in answer to pressure to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty or to justify a hike in allocations for defence. On China, we either maintain an enigmatic silence or make overtures with a mixture of awe and silent admiration.

Clutching on to an occasional Chinese statement professing non-interference in Kashmir, we display a palpable reluctance to focus attention on the seriousness of the Chinese acquisition of nuclear weapons. All this reminds one of the hyperboles in which Pandit Nehru and the Defence Minister Krishna Menon talked about the richness of Sino-Indian links in the fifties before the Chinese aggression rudely jolted them. Even in early 1962 when China was staking claim to 50,000 square miles of Indian territory, questioning our relationship with Bhutan and Sikkim, ridiculing non-alignment and raising doubts about Kashmir's accession, we choose to abstain on a resolution in the U.N General Assembly condemning

Chinese repression in Tibet. Such was the level of appeasement by missed contemptuously a suggestion for a Bandung-type non-aligned meet to discuss what some other members termed "the expanding yellow imperialism".

Gullible as we are, is India not playing into China's hands yet again ? It is now an accepted fact that the Chinese aggression of 1962 was not aimed at annexing large chunks of Indian territory but intended to humble India and to send out a subtle message across the world that China was the dominant power in Asia next only to the then Soviet Union. By acquiescing in the trampling of Tibet which was our buffer against the Red hordes we stirred disquieting doubts in the minds of many Asian countries about our ability to protect the small states adjacent to or abutting our frontiers. The abject Indian military response to the Chinese aggression made matters worse. Since then China has assiduously nurtured the reputation of being the Kingpin of the region while India has been content to play Russia, Vietnam and even South-East Asia in years to come.

What India is blissfully oblivious of is that it is being encircled by countries that have acquired teeth courtesy a China. The Chinese are assisting Pakistan in setting to it 300 MW nuclear reactor besides selling to it M-11 short range ballistic missiles and Han class submarines. To Bangladesh which is turning increasingly hostile towards India it has given Jianghu class frigates, anti-ship missiles and fighter aircraft. To Saudi Arabia which has the potential to make common cause with Pakistan it has supplied CSS-2 missiles which have a 2,500 km range, enough to strike key targets in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Burmese, who have been fanning insurgency in Manipur have bought from the Chinese 1-7 fighters, patrol boats and radars. Yet, India accepts all this without a murmur of protest because it fights shy of rubbing China on the wrong side.

It was left to US Senator Lary Pressler to articulate what should have been India's unambiguous position when he appeared recently before the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on East Asian

and Pacific Affairs. Pressler warned that China was building a new generation of strategic missiles with huge nuclear warheads which represented a threat to its neighbors. He found it unrealistic for the Clinton administration to put pressure on India and Pakistan to cap their nuclear programs if there was no control over China's nuclear or missile program.

That China is going ahead full steam with militarization is evident from the fact that in the last four years its defence expenditure has gone up by about 50 percent. American intelligence reports estimate that China has over 300 nuclear weapons and advanced technology to enrich and refine uranium. A new Chinese nuclear missile the DF-31 which is expected to be ready by early 1996 has a range of 4,960 miles which makes practically the whole of India an easy target. The DF-31 will be capable of carrying a 100-kiloton warhead- 10 times bigger than the Hiroshima bomb.

While the Chinese are indulgent towards India for tactical reasons, their behavior in the South China Sea is being seen as a litmus test of their future intentions towards the South East Asia region. The Chinese forces had seized the Paracel Islands in the northern part of the South China Sea in 1974. In 1988 they captured several Vietnamese-occupied outposts and thereby established their foothold in the Spratly Islands which are being claimed besides China by Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei. Analysts say China's ultimate strategic objectives is to convert the entire South China Sea into a Chinese lake.

With such a scenario, there is bound to be suspicion of Chinese intentions which India could exploit to its advantages. Yet, while India has a token economic presence in South East Asia, the Chinese are making their presence felt strongly. After years of efforts, India managed to get observer status at the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) recently, an encouraging sign which needs to be built upon. The Chinese, however, stole a march when they were invited with much fanfare to the Seattle meeting of the Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum. So complete

was the Chinese sway that two founding members of APEC, Taiwan and Hongkong, were forced to stay away because the Chinese made their absence a condition for participation. In the recent months, Singapore and Malaysia in particular have evinced keen interest in India. It is time this country adopt a more pragmatic approach in furthering its interests in the region. While greater participation in ASEAN would be of much benefit, there is no time to waste in seeking entry into such a potentially important grouping as APEC whose member states account for nearly 40 percent of the world trade. This country can ill afford leaving the field clear for China at a time when the climate is propitious for India to benefit from a more aggressive economic stance in tune with its size and status.

The latest Chinese nuclear test is bound to heighten fears of Chinese hegemonic designs in Asia which could be used to India's advantage. At the same time it would be foolhardy to lull ourselves into a sense of complacency just because the Chinese are tending to reasons. The lessons learnt in 1962 can only be forgotten at our own peril.

*Indian Express, June 20, 1994*

## China's game plan Tibet's status and the border

Sunandak K.Datta-Ray

Though it has repeatedly been stressed and rightly so -that this one visit cannot wash away all Sino-Indian problems, the impression has gained ground that India has moved closer to an inflexible Chinese position. Not only is Rajiv Gandhi's recent reference to "mutual interests" seen as a concession to Beijing's insistence on mutual accommodation" but New Delhi also seems to be veering around to China's expedient thesis that the border should be shelved for the time being and attention focussed instead on improving relations in general to create an atmosphere of harmony in which all irritants will naturally vanish.

Any convergence of views is, welcome if it means a genuine narrowing of differences with both sides moving to the middle ground. But it is doubtful that process can be said to be taking place in Sino-Indian affairs. There is nothing to suggest that Mr. Gandhi has in mind a clear definition of "mutual interests" or any understanding of how the phrase differs from "mutual accommodation". Nor does New Delhi seem to have examined China's reason for wanting to defer border negotiations to some uncertain future date.

Instead, the deliberate publicity build-up for this trip, and the refusal to take note of Chinese coolness ; suggests a shortsighted determination to let minds be clouded again by the synthetic sentiment of Bhai Bhai euphoria and the even more tempting myth of a rich and ancient relationship that was sundered with the coming of the

British and that now awaits only the healing touch of a Prime Ministerial visit to spring back into animated life.

If India and China have such a closely entwined past to fall back on, the solidarity example of Dr. Kotnis and his medical mission would not have been trotted out on every imaginable occasion. True, there have been periods of close cultural and commercial cooperation but they were too intermittent and too long ago to justify any kind of Pan-Asian romanticism. On the whole too India's relation in the North were with or through Tibet whose buffer status also played an important part through the ages in preventing friction between India and China.

### **Mythical ties**

But this role is ignored and efforts made instead to create the illusion of a vigorous Sino-Indian partnership partly to feed national vanity but partly also to prevent any kind of clinical assessment of modern Beijing's diplomatic sophistry which refuses to allow anyone to dwell on India's more direct historical connection with Tibet and its crucial relevance to today's problems with China.

The argument that the border problem should not be raised at all until harmony has been revived is especially suspect. For it implies that the dispute cropped up because friendship between India and China was weakened, when everyone knows that it was the other way around, trust and goodwill being casualties of the border conflict. But it suits Beijing to put the cart before the horse so that Indian firmness in defence of legitimate rights can be dismissed as the product of extraneous machinations, of the USSR and USA in the late fifties and early sixties.

Emphasis must be laid on two points. First, Sino-Indian ties could not have been better when they were destroyed by the border dispute, and there is no reason to suppose that even if Mr. Gandhi succeeds in reviving cordiality it will not again succumb to specific differences on matters of vital national interests. Secondly, the bor-

der is the strongest and certainly the most important element in the connection between the two countries and though the myth-travellers, the fervent promoters of Pan-Asianism and all those others who hope for rich pickings from the opening of a new front, so to speak are working overtime to build up the case for friendship in disregard of the border, truth to tell, there is very little to go on, either in terms of past evidence or future prospects.

### **Delaying tactics**

The fragility and limited scope of the Sino-Indian relationship, and its proven inability to survive in the face of a major political challenge, should prompt us to ask what the real reason might be for Beijing's anxiety to postpone discussion of the border. For India should know that every stand that China takes is explicable at several levels. Also, that the Chinese are the last people on earth to pursue the camera of ancient amity unless there is something to be gained from the strategy.

The most plausible conclusion seems to be not that close cordiality is regarded either as feasible or as an essential precondition for discussing the border but that the Chinese themselves are not yet ready-for whatever reason-to enter into serious negotiations with India. They may wish first to finalize an agreement with the Soviet Union, or to reach a more definite state in their delicate minuet?... with Bhutan. The Kingdom has so far scrupulously confined itself to a neutral discussion of only frontier matters, refusing to be drawn even into any expression of political support for China. But last week's establishment of diplomatic relations with Islamabad might be seen as paving the way for a similar announcement in respect to Beijing, which would evidently be regarded as a snub to India. Presumably, some kind of formal diplomatic recognition will ultimately be unavoidable if Bhutan and China are to sign a border agreement.

There are suggestions too that Beijing might wish to defer substan-

tive Sino-Indian talks until its own bargaining position is stronger. The serious military mobilization that took place last year is believed to have revealed military weakness, confirming that while the Indian armed forces have advanced considerably since 1962, China's force have much of the fervor and discipline of the old People's Liberation Army. China may also have enough on its hands with restructuring the economy, modernizing the army and trying to neutralize the troubles in Tibet want to disturb the status quo in another sphere.

Indeed, this may account for an initially unenthusiastic response to Mr. Gandhi's venture, and the distinct impression that he is going because he wants to, not because his hosts have any particular desire to do business with him just now. Apparently the Chinese had first to be assured that he would not raise the border or Tibet and that talks would be confined to meaningless generalities masquerading as an exercise in mending fences.

Insult was added to injury when a seemingly planted question on the eve of his visit raised the controversy of an alleged air violation by India, and when the Doordarshan team sent in advance to China (like a team of Journalists) to engage in domestic P.R. for the Prime Minister was reportedly denied access to any top ranking Chinese dignitary. Apparently, even Mr. Gandhi's program does not yet include a firm meeting with Deng Xiaoping.

It may be revealing, that just when New Delhi lifted the 26 year ban of the Beijing Review as earnest of a desire for a reconciliation, and in the hope of inducting a favorable atmosphere in China, the journal chose to reiterate Chinese refusal to accept the McMahon Line. Also Lui Shuqing somewhat ungraciously played down the significance of the visit by suggesting that a settlement does not depend on the "level" of talks.

These are all signals that it would be unwise to ignore. It would be unwise also to carry reasonableness to an extent where we appear to be more mindful of the adversary's interests and sensitivities than

our own. It was predictably patriotic of the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister to say that "if China was asked to accept the occupation of its territory, how can it be reported to the Chinese people ?". In contrast, Mr. Gandhi's "national sentiments and the national dignity of both countries have to be understood and respected" sounds almost like a plea for indulgence.

Finally- and this the crux of the matter- if talks on the border are held now they will be- as they should be - about the status of Tibet, for everything- India's claims, the sanctity of the McMohan Line and Beijing's case rests on the position that is accorded to Tibet, not just today but throughout history. It bears stressing yet again that if Tibet has, indeed, always been the "Tibet region of China" which is how India recognized it in 1954, again reiterating that stand earlier this year when the Lhasa riots erupted, the 1914 Simla Agreement with its acknowledgement of Tibet's international personality was patently illegal and cannot sanction any claims at all, leave alone the McMahan Line.

### **Lhasa's rights**

The Tibet question cannot, therefore, be wished away so long as India stands by the traditional eastern border which Lhasa's representative endorsed, and so long, moreover, as the Tibetans themselves remain unreconciled to their present subjugation, as again demonstrated by the December 10 ( Human rights Day) demonstrations in Lhasa. The two questions are inextricably linked, and any talks on the border held at this juncture cannot (bit) offer further sustenance to the resistance movement in Tibet by implicitly recognizing the country's historical independence. Little wonder then that the Chinese are so anxious to let sleeping borders lie until the Tibetans have been silenced, when Beijing might even agree to some alignments but as a concession from China, not as right derived from a sovereign Lhasa's international commitments.

There is absolutely no reason, however, why India should acquiesce

in this tactic by agreeing not to raise the border issue now, thereby conceding a major strategic advantage to the Chinese and betraying six million Tibetans all over again. Rajiv Gandhi would have done better not to insist on this jaunt; having taken the plunge, he can at least try to regain the diplomatic initiative instead of tamely falling in with China's game plan.

## **Tibet a security risk for India**

The vast Himalayan region of India is currently exposed to a major security risk as China has established several nuclear bases in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) along the Indo-Tibet borders. It has recently come to the light that there exist radar stations and dormant air strips at various strategic locations in the TAR. In the early sixties, China had constructed nuclear manufacturing centres at Dhashu and near lake kokonor. When the Sino-Indian border clash took place, these nuclear centres were under construction and in the production stage. Now these have become operational. According to the Dharamsala based Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE), a large number of photograph and other information smuggled out of TAR by the Buddhist monks, supporters of the Dalai Lama and foreigners show that the Beijing-government now has stepped up its activities along the Sino-Indian borders. A secret report from Lhasa (capital of TAR) say that the most notorious secret service agency of China—"Ninth Bureau"—has named the Lake Kokonor atomic project as the "Northwest Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy. It is code named as the "Ninth Academy". According to the TGIE sources, China has already set up missile-base in the south of Lake Kokonor. Meanwhile, the Union Defence Ministry sources have also corroborated the fact that China has stepped up its nuclear (as well an military) activity in the TAR. The "Ninth Bureau" is the most secret Organization of Beijing's entire nuclear program and also serves as a research Centre for

detonation development and radio Chemistry. In 1971, when the Bangladesh war took place, China brought its nuclear weapons that were stationed in the Tsaidam basin in Amdo area of the TAR. As per highly placed sources, China has deployed 300 to 400 nuclear warheads, are believed to be stationed in the TAR. Due to the stationing of nuclear warheads in lake Kokonor and mobilization of Chinese army in and around the Mansarovar area, India is currently facing grave security risk. Interestingly enough, whenever China faced internal problems, it raised the anti-Indian bogey. The Sino-Indian border clashes of 1962 was also a repetition of this tendency. Currently, China is in a transition. The "Bamboo Curtain" now stands withdrawn and China has opened up its economy. Moreover Beijing is facing terrible problems in the TAR due to the escalation of anti-China activities by pro Dalai Lama elements in Tibet. As China is currently facing internal problems, it might try to launch military adventures in India to divert the attention of the Chinese people from burning problems to the country. The sources said that China's DF-4 missiles—China first Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles or ICBM's—have been deployed in Tsaidam basin of Tibet. "Two missiles are believed to be positioned horizontally in a tunnel, fuel and oxidizer is stored in separate tunnels with lines to the launching pad". Another site of missile has also been located at Delingha, about 200 km from Tsaidam. In Tibet's Amdo area, four CSS-4 missiles have a massive range of 8,000 miles (12,874 km). The Chinese military presence in Tibet, the TGIE-Sources claimed has a strength of 500,000 "uniformed personnel". Beijing however declared that in Tibet, it has deployed only 40,394 soldiers. The division of TAR in six sub-military districts, massive nuclear build up and the mobilization of armed forces along Sino-Indian borders show that Beijing has a sinister design. Had China no bad intentions the building up of the TAR as a "military base" would not have been carried out. Just near the Indian borders, China now have two independent infantry division, six border defence regiments, five independent border defence battalions and three artillery regiments. Though China had been carrying out its military build-up in

Tibet under extreme secrecy, several facts now have been flashed. One such "secret fact" has reached India and union defence ministry also knows it—"headquarter of the Tibet Military District has been shifted from Chengdu to an unknown place lying South-West of Lhasa". A new military complex, currently under construction is also coming up near Gongkar airport. Beijing also recently established a military base at Karimu which is very to India. "very recently, China dumped an unknown quantity of radioactive waste on Tibetan plateau. In view of the escalation of the anti-Beijing activities by the Tibetans and demands of the Dalai Lama that Tibet should be transformed into a zone of peace, the danger of Chinese military expeditions on the Himalayan region of India, now has started looming large.

*Far and Wide- November 10, 1976*

## Chinese checkers

S.P.Singh

In 1949, the Chinese communists emerged into a world characterized by an uncertain and uneasy balance of power, revolutions and instability throughout Asia and world-wide" cold war " between the Soviet Union and the United States. World War II had shattered the pre-war pattern of relationships and balance of forces in Asia. Imperialist Japan was reduced to impotence and the foundations of European colonialism in the region were undermined.

At the end, independence movements and nationalist revolutions swept almost the entire Asia and in a series of swift changes, new governments were set up in the newly freed areas. It was truly a situation when the entire region was up for grabs because of the power vacuum caused by the British withdrawal. Although the USSR and the US adopted high profile policy(of which the Korean war of 1950-53 was the result), their interest in the region was limited to winning friends and influencing people. Not China's!

The Communist regime in Beijing clearly wanted military dominance and expansion. The seizure of Tibet in 1951, attack on Upper Burma in 1955(in collusion with Kachin, Chin and Shah tribes on the Tri-junction to Burma, China and India), invasion on Vietnam in 1978 and on India in 1962 are sufficient evidence of the Chinese irredentism. China took on the US in Korea to bring home the message that Beijing would settle for no less than unconditional annexation of Taiwan. Later to live down its image as a satellite communists power to the USSR, it fell out with Moscow on the

boundary issue. All these had the making of a great Chinese design to dominate the region through allurement, high pressure diplomacy or sheer brute force. These policy components have not changed since and China pursue them persistently.,

Ignoring all these imponderables, India, it seems, had agreed with China during the seventh round of talks in Beijing last July that the boundary dispute is a "mapping problem" and not the seizure of Indian areas by China in gross violation of all international norms. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said in Calcutta in December last that the "border problem with China regarding Arunachal Pradesh is due to mapping techniques- earlier methods of marking the McMohan line as not modernized"

The People's Daily of China, responding to something the writer had written, said" " China has no need for a trail of strength (with India)...map-making techniques have changed since the McMohan Line was drawn in 1914. Let's have aerial and satellite mapping on the border to know where we stand".

If such an understanding has reached between the two countries, it raises some very serious questions which need to be examined closely. First, the nature of the McMohan Line, second the claim line and the line of control, third, the geo-political realities of the region, and fourth, China's behavior with its neighbor which is governed largely by its concern for the disputed territories and those left over by history.

The fact is that the McMohan Line was really never drawn: it existed long before it was so recognized at the Simla conference. The line as largely represented by the Himalayas which cleanly cut apart the Indian peninsula from Tibet and within these distinctly separated areas developed different cultures, languages and lifestyles;

This was true of the north-west also where the high Pamir ranges atop the undulating plateau of Central Asia kept us safe from the marauders and plunderers who roamed about freely on the vast stretches of steppe, endless and simmering deserts on the other side

of the Pamir, just 26 miles beyond the Indian boundaries. And, a rich civilization flourished in Mohen Jodaro and Harappa while people lived primitive life the other side of the mountain.

The Himalayas were, thus, the most forbidding physical manifestation of the McMahon Line and most respected at that, unlike in Europe where Napoleon could ride from Paris to Moscow without having to climb down his saddle.

Nothing like India China boundary dispute was heard of until 1959 when Nehru suddenly and belatedly announced in Parliament the Chinese intrusion in Aksai Chin and said it was the area where not "not a blade of grass grows". On such statements, Mahavir Tyagi and Acharya Kripalani joined the battle with Nehru and said nothing grew in Alaska also: why did the US not return it to the USSR which was ready to pay back dollar 7.6 million, the price on which the Russian Czar sold it to America in 1861.

The constant Chinese intrusion resulted in political developments which climaxed into the 1962 war that left Nehru a disillusioned man. Since then there had been an average of a dozen intrusion every year either of troops or stray grazers who later refused to go, followed by protests and counter protests. And, then a long silence until another grazier is sighted again. In the process, India lost huge territory to China without hail and fanfare. It is the doctrine of constant military pressure which is an instrument of China's foreign policy.

Having established firm control over the seized territory, China has been shifting its border marker calling it a "claim line" which later became the "line of actual control", the two catch phrases which stood for loss of Indian territory to China. The "claim line" which China wants to be a basis of talks, not negotiation, between the two countries include some 90,000sq. km. of Indian land. And the line of actual control has within it the area which China had captured during the past clashes and a war. Or after intrusions.

The Chinese "claim line" ironically, also includes as "disputed lost

and undefined territories" half of the Soviet Union, north of the Ussuri, the entire Central Asia, South East Asia and north eastern India which will add up to many times the size of the present day mainland area of China. To periodically renew this claim, the Beijing government had been sending troops, frontier guards or just grazers into these areas. This happened on "February 17, 1978 with Vietnam when incidentally the then External Affairs Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was in Canton and again when the seventh round of talks had to begin last July. These do not include the regular intrusions since 1959 which have since become a regular feature of Chinese behavior with its neighbor.

This area is also close to afghanistan which is of strategic interests for the US, China and Pakistan either to contain Soviet influence or to splinter up India at some convenient time later. Along most parts of the border, except at Nathu La in Sikkim where Indian and Chinese troops stand eyeball to eyeball. Chinese have been tampering with the borderline almost regularly. The intrusions in Sumdorong Chu river area and Sum-I- Chu Valley are therefore, on the set pattern.

Still more disconcerting is that Karakoram highway has been opened to traffic and China-Pakistan strategic cooperation has been upgraded to co-production of military hardware with assistance from the US. India has succeeded in preventing China and Pakistan from linking the illegally occupied territories in Jammu and Kashmir by interposing its troops in the Saichin glacier region which has been under great military pressure recently.,

The agitation in Punjab and Gorkhaland has added new dimension to the crisis. The "Gorkhaland" area is the main supply route to the troops deployed in the forward positions in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh through the narrow corridor of Siliguri between Nepal and Bangladesh. The concentrated activities of Punjab extremists in the Amritsar-Gurdaspur sector, which sits astride the road and rail links to Jammu and Kashmir, is another risk factor in the dispensation of "strategic consensus".

Before the accord was reached with Laldenga, the Mizo National Front was funded and quipped by China. There is no indication that they have stopped doing it. Nagaland and several other areas in the north-east are on the boil also because of the help from China which retains its political leverage through local political parties.

Over and beyond these, China has the supreme obsession with history. To understand this strange Chinese paranoid, we have to go to as far back as 200 B.C. when the first Chinese emperor Chin Shih Hwang, who turned a group of warring nations into a Chinese empire. He built the 2,250 mile long Great China Wall. Later, Pan Chao, a general, conquered up to the Caspian sea in 97 A.D., almost the entire Central Asia. In 600 A.D. Emperor Tang propounded the concept of suzerainty and subdued the entire Korean peninsula.

Continuing the conquest, in 1,400 A. D. Ying Le Ti of the Ming dynasty established control over the Sunda Seas (Indonesia) and the Indian Ocean. His fleet proclaimed Chinese supremacy over Cambodia, Siam, (Thailand) and the Malacan Peninsula. Java, Sumatra and Ceylon.

The Chinese expansion was stopped after the British and the French intervened in the region in the 19th century which finally ended the aggressions of the Manchu dynasty. But, the suzerainty mentality persisted when both Sun Yat Sen and his Koumintang follower Chiang Kai-shek persisted in laying the claim to most of the Asian states. Mao had discarded everything of the past except the map of the Mink empire.

### Mapping a line

McMohan line is neither a line nor was it ever drawn by Sir Henry McMohan, who was then a secretary in the British Foreign Office, as a matter of fact, the birth of the Macmohan line was as fortuitous as its existence is controversial.

The British government convened a conference at Simla in 1912-13

to fix the boundary between India, Tibet and China. Mr McMohan presided over the conference which finally brought about agreements on the boundaries. Thus, the McMohan Line.

It may be recalled that Tibet had never been a part of China, not in any case between 1912-13 when the Simla conference took place, and 1950, when China forcibly captured it. Earlier also, the Chinese control over Tibet had only been intermittent. Tibet therefore, was a fully independent and sovereign nation, and thus, entitled to enter into any boundary agreement, with any nation. Tibet had its own representative at the Simla conference with whom China agreed to talk.

The plenipotentiaries of the three countries agreed at the Simla conference on the demarcation of a frontier which has been the "natural, ethnic and administrative boundaries, running some 850 miles along the high watershed ridges of the Himalayas from Thala in Bhutan to the Kiphu Pass on the Burmese border and beyond. This line clearly marked out what was then the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), then fully under British control.

The Chinese representative, however, did not ratify the agreement reached at Simla and said that it was contrived outside the Simla convention and that no talks were held at on India-Tibet borders. The Chinese representative also alleged that Mr McMohan made a secret deal with the Tibetan representative. The Chinese representative also argued that the agreement was illegal also because it contravened the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, the Anglo-Chinese Power Treaty of 1907 and the Nine Power Treaty of 1922 which gave Tibet the status of a vassal state. It was argued that the Simla Conference only discussed the boundary between outer and inner Tibet and not between Tibet and India.

Conceding that China was not a party to the agreement on the MacMohan Line, Tibet had however, full sovereign right to enter into accords independent of "China as it did with Ladakh in 1684 and with Nepal in 1856, which was in operation until it was abro-

gated by the Sino-Nepalese Treaty of 1956. And much before the MacMohan Line was agreed upon, the British Indian government had entered into a series of agreements with many tribes in the region, marking out the Balpara Frontier and the Sadiya Frontier Track which together constituted the North East Frontier Agency area.

The tribes living to the south of the McMohan line-the Monba, Akas, Daflas, Miris and the Abhors- were of the same ethnic stock as the other hill tribes of Assom and had no kinship with Tibetans. These tribes accepted British control. However, when the boundaries question hotted up, Zhou Enlai wrote a series of letter to Jawaharlal Nehru in which he rejected the "so called "McMohan line as a product of British aggression.

Nehru demolished the Chinese contention in long letters to the Chinese premier and emphatically stated that the McMohan Line alone could be the basis of the future negotiations between the two countries because it was also a national ethnic and administrative boundary" between the tow countries. Writing again in 1959, Zhou Enlai claimed some 50,000 sq miles south of the McMohan line. While such claims were made and rejected, Chinese troops advanced 40 miles into the Chang Chenmo Valley in southern Ladakh and killed nine Indian Soldiers in 1959 who were patrolling the Kongka Pass.

Between the Simla conference and the first Chinese intrusion, the Himalayan watershed had been accepted as the natural boundary which China respected. But after that came a spate of Chines claims in all directions, to the midstream of Ussuri in the north, deep down into the Vietnamese territories and across the Himalayas into the Indian territories. And ironically enough in all cases, the Chinese had referred to the historicity of disputes and rejected all treaties, calling them as those made between two unequal.

This behavior cannot be explained except in terms of revivalism which will also entitle Italy to claim the Roman Empire which once spread over entire Europe and much beyond.

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